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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME X

FAUST CLAVIGO EGMONT
THE WAYWARD LOVER
REYNARD, THE FOX

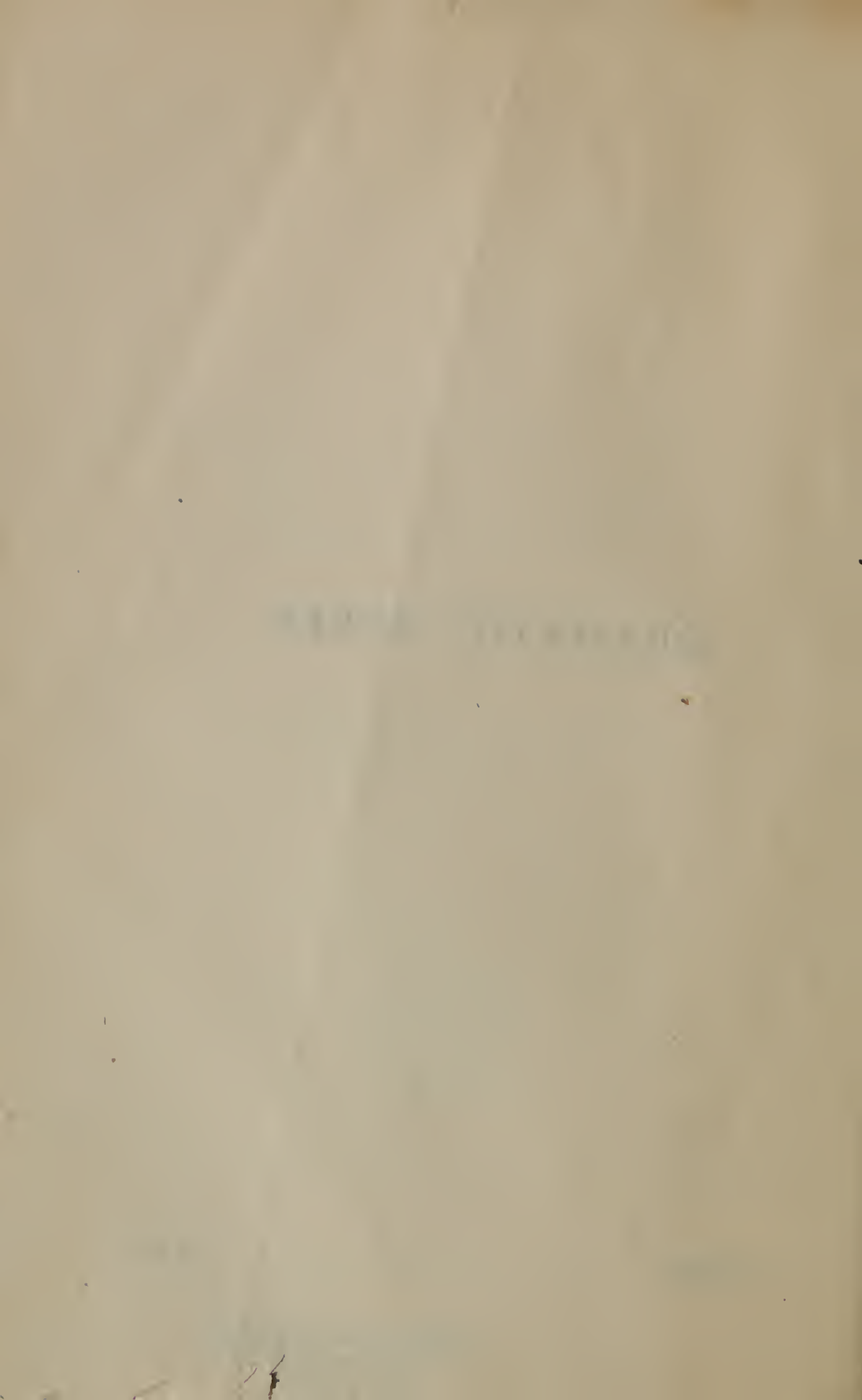
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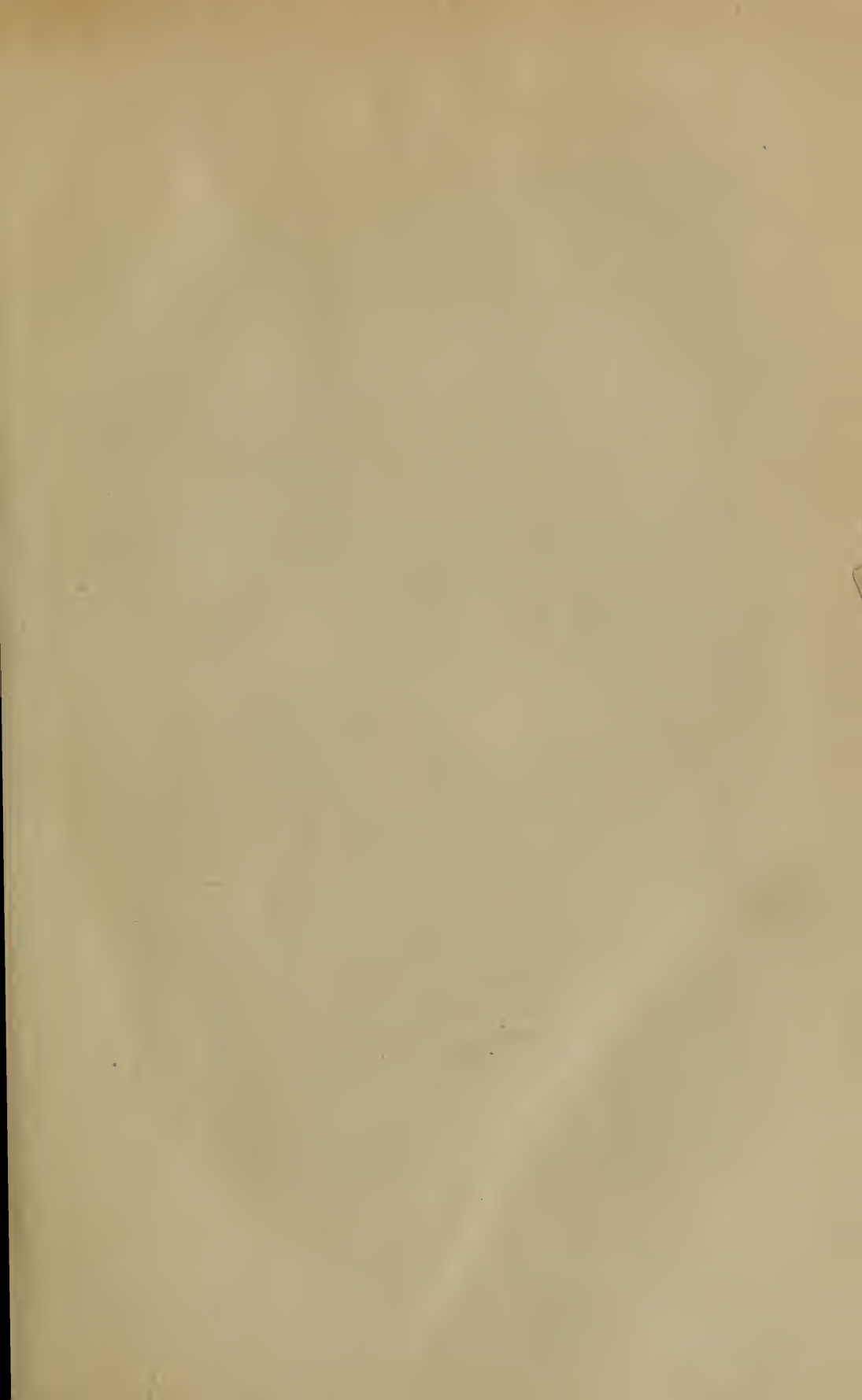


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DRAMATIC WORKS





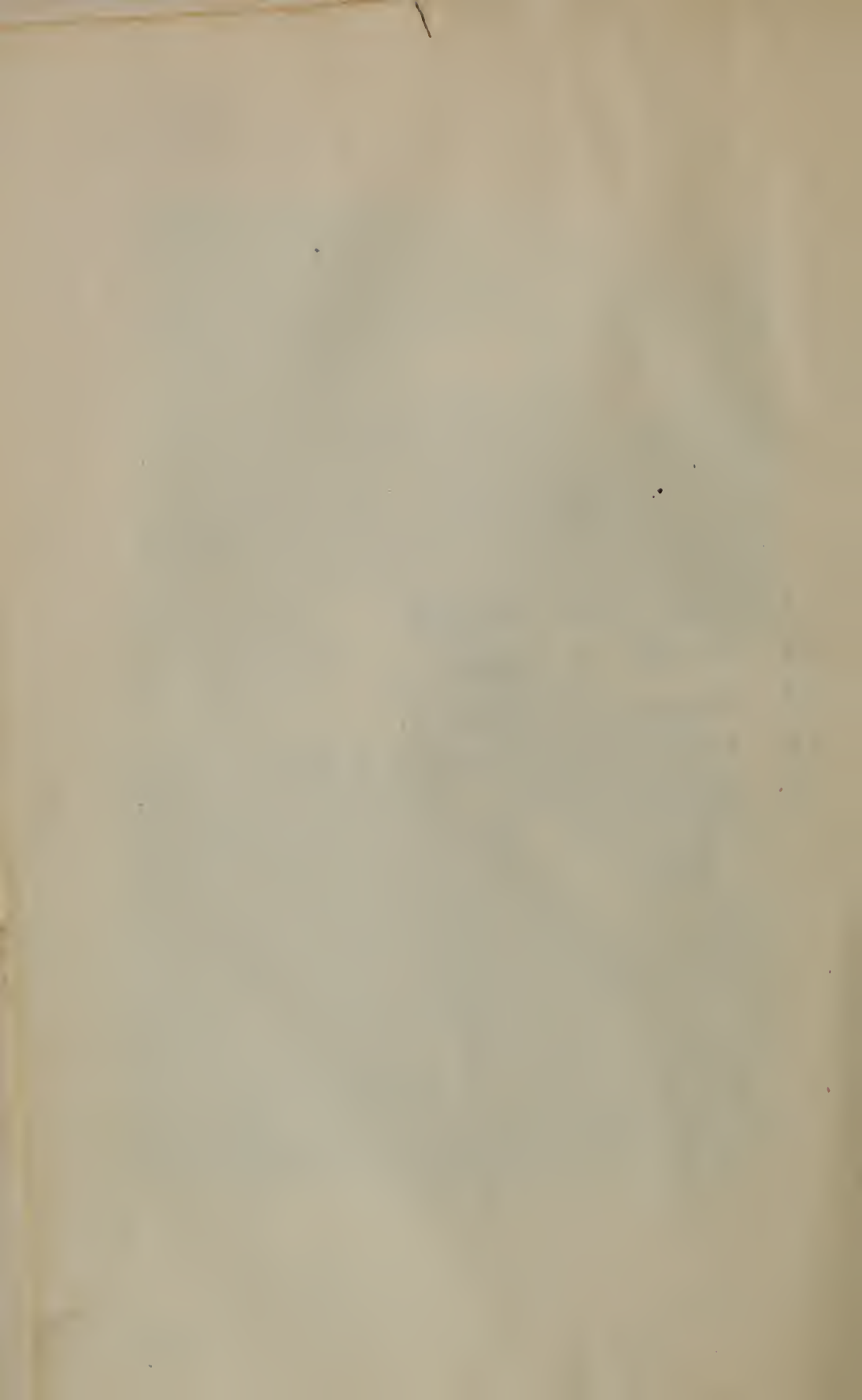


THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

—Reynard the Fox

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FAUST: •
A DRAMATIC POEM.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE, BY A. HAYWARD, Esq.

FAUST.

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN.

THE LORD; THE HEAVENLY HOSTS; *afterwards* MEPHISTOPHELES.

The three Archangels come forward.

RAPHAEL. The sun chimes in, as ever, with the emulous music of his brother spheres, and performs his prescribed journey with thunder-speed. His aspect gives strength to the angels, though none can fathom him. Thy inconceivably sublime works are glorious as on the first day.

GABRIEL. And rapid, inconceivably rapid, the pomp of the earth revolves; the brightness of paradise alternates with deep, fearful night. The sea foams up in broad waves at the deep base of the rocks; and rock and sea are whirled on in the ever rapid course of the spheres.

MICHAEL. And storms are roaring as if in rivalry, from sea to land, from land to sea, and form all around a chain of the deepest ferment in their rage. There, flashing desolation flares before the path of the thunder-clap. But thy messengers, Lord, respect the mild going of thy day.

THE THREE. Thy aspect gives strength to the angels, though none can fathom thee, and all thy sublime works are glorious as on the first day.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Since, Lord, you approach once again, and inquire how things are going on with us, and on other occasions were not displeased to see me—therefore is it that you see me also amongst your suite. Excuse me, I cannot talk fine, not though the whole circle should cry scorn on me. My pathos would certainly make you laugh, had you not left off laughing. I have nothing to say about suns and worlds; I only mark how men are plaguing themselves. The little god of the world continues ever of the same stamp, and is as odd as on the first day. He would lead a somewhat better life of it had you not given him a

glimmering of heaven's light. He calls it reason, and uses it only to be the most brutal of brutes. He seems to me, with your Grace's leave, like one of the long-legged grasshoppers, which is ever flying, and bounding as it flies, and then sings its old song in the grass;—and would that he did but lie always in the grass! He thrusts his nose into every puddle.

THE LORD. Have you nothing else to say to me? Are you always coming to me for no other purpose than to complain? Is nothing ever to your liking upon earth?

MEPHISTOPHELES. No, Lord! I find things there, as ever, miserably bad. Men, in their days of wretchedness, move my pity; even I myself have not the heart to torment the poor things.

THE LORD. Do you know Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES. The Doctor?

THE LORD. My servant!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Verily! he serves you after a fashion of his own. The fool's meat and drink are not of earth. The ferment of his spirit impels him towards the far away. He himself is half conscious of his madness. Of heaven—he demands its brightest stars; and of earth—its very highest enjoyment; and all the near, and all the far, content not his deeply-agitated breast.

THE LORD. Although he does but serve me in perplexity now, I shall soon lead him into light. When the tree buds, the gardener knows that blossom and fruit will deck the coming years.

MEPHISTOPHELES. What will you wager? you shall lose him yet, if you give me leave to guide him quietly my own way.

THE LORD. So long as he lives upon the earth, so long be it not forbidden to thee. Man is liable to error whilst his struggle lasts.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am much obliged to you for that; for I have never had any fancy for the dead. I like plump, fresh cheeks the best. I am not at home to a corpse. I am like the cat to the mouse.

THE LORD. Enough, it is permitted thee. Divert this spirit from his original source, and bear him, if thou canst seize him, down on thy own path with thee. And stand abashed, when thou art compelled to own—a good man, in his dark strivings, may still be conscious of the right way.

Thence

MEPHISTOPHELES. Well, well — only it will not last long. I am not at all in pain for my wager. Should I succeed, excuse my triumphing with my whole soul. Dust shall he eat, and with a relish, like my cousin, the renowned snake.

THE LORD. There also you are free to act as you like. I have never hated the like of you. Of all the spirits that deny, the scoffer is the least offensive to me. Man's activity is all too prone to slumber: he soon gets fond of unconditional repose; I am, therefore, glad to give him a companion, who stirs and works, and must, as devil, be doing. But ye, the true children of heaven, rejoice in the living profusion of beauty. The creative essence, which works and lives through all time, embrace you within the happy bounds of love; and what hovers in changeful seeming do ye fix firm with everlasting thoughts. (*Heaven closes, the archangels disperse.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES *alone.* I like to see the Ancient One occasionally, and take care not to break with him. It is really civil in so great a Lord to speak so kindly with the Devil himself.

FAUST.

NIGHT.

FAUST *in a high-vaulted, narrow, Gothic chamber, seated restlessly at his desk.*

FAUST. Have now, alas! by zealous exertion, thoroughly mastered philosophy, the jurist's craft, and medicine, — and, to my sorrow, theology, too. Here I stand, poor fool that I am, just as wise as before. I am called Master, ay, and Doctor, and have now for nearly ten years been leading my pupils about — up and down, cross-ways and crooked ways — by the nose; and see that we can know nothing! This it is that almost burns up the heart within me. True, I am cleverer than all the solemn triflers — doctors, masters, writers, and priests. No doubts nor scruples of any sort trouble me; I fear neither hell nor the devil. For this very reason is all joy torn from me. I no longer fancy I know anything worth knowing; I no longer fancy I could reach anything to better and convert mankind. Then I have neither land nor money, nor honor and rank in the world. No dog would like to live so any longer. I have therefore devoted myself to magic — whether, through the power and voice of the Spirit, many a mystery might not become known to me; that I may no longer, with bitter sweat, be obliged to speak of what I do not know; that I may learn what it is that holds the world together in its inmost core, see all the springs and seeds of production, and drive no longer a paltry traffic in words.

Oh! would that thou, radiant moonlight, wert looking for the last time upon my misery; thou, for whom I have sat watching so many a midnight at this desk; then, over books and papers, melancholy friend, didst thou appear to me! — Oh! that I might wander on the mountain-tops in thy loved light — hover with spirits around the mountain caves — flit over the fields in thy glimmer, and, disencumbered from all the fumes of knowledge, bathe myself sound in thy dew!

Woe is me! am I still penned up in this dungeon?—accursed, musty, walled hole!—where even the precious light of heaven breaks mournfully through painted panes, stunted by this heap of books,—which worms eat—dust begrimes—which, up to the very top of the vault, a smoke-smear'd paper encompasses; with glasses and boxes ranged round, with instruments piled up on all sides, ancestral lumber stuffed in with the rest! This is thy world, and a precious world it is!

And dost thou still ask, why thy heart flutters so confinedly in thy bosom?—Why a vague aching deadens within thee every stirring principle of life?—Instead of the animated nature, for which God made man, thou hast naught around thee but beasts' skeletons and dead men's bones, in smoke and mould.

Up! away! out into the wide world! And this mysterious book, from Nostradamus' own hand, is it not guide enough for thee? Thou then knowest the course of the stars, and, when nature instructs thee, the soul's essence then rises up to thee, as one spirit speaks to another. Vain! that dull poring here expounds the holy signs to thee! Ye are hovering, ye Spirits, near me; answer me, if you hear. (*He opens the book and perceives the sign of the Macrocosm.*)

Ah! what rapture thrills at once through all my senses at this sight! I feel a fresh, hallowed life-joy, new-glowing, shoot through nerve and vein. Was it a god that traced these signs?—which still the storm within me, fill my poor heart with gladness, and, by a mystical inspiration, unveil the powers of nature all around me. Am I a god? All grows so bright! I see, in these pure lines, nature herself working in my soul's presence. Now for the first time do I conceive what the sage saith, — “The spirit-world is not closed. Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead! Up, acolyte! bathe, untired, thy earthly breast in the morning-red.” (*He contemplates the sign.*)

How all weaves itself into the whole; one works and lives in the other. How heavenly influences ascend and descend, and reach each other the golden buckets, — on bliss-exhaling pinions, press from heaven through earth, all ringing harmoniously through the All.

What a show! but, ah! a show only! Where shall I seize thee, infinite nature? Ye breasts, where? ye sources of all life, on which hang heaven and earth, towards which the blighted breast presses — ye gush, ye suckle, and am I thus

languishing in vain? (*He turns over the book indignantly, and sees the sign of the Spirit of the Earth.*)★

How differently this sign affects me! Thou, Spirit of the Earth, art nearer to me! Already do I feel my energies exalted, already glow as with new wine; I feel courage to venture into the world; to endure earthly weal, earthly woe; to wrestle with storms, and stand unshaken 'mid the shipwreck's crash. — Clouds thicken over me; the moon pales her light; the lamp dies away; exhalations arise; red beams flash round my head; a cold shuddering flickers down from the vaulted roof and fastens on me! I feel it — thou art flitting round me, prayer-compelled Spirit. Unveil thyself! Ah! what a tearing in my heart — all my senses are upstirring to new sensations! I feel my whole heart surrendered to thee. Thou must — thou must! — should it cost me my life. (*He seizes the book and pronounces mystically the sign of the Spirit. A red flame flashes up; the SPIRIT appears in the flame.*)

SPIRIT. Who calls me?

FAUST (*averting his face*). Horrible vision!

SPIRIT. Thou hast compelled me hither, by dint of long sucking at my sphere. And now —

FAUST. Torture! I endure thee not.

SPIRIT. Thou prayest, panting, to see me, to hear my voice, to gaze upon my face. Thy powerful invocation works upon me. I am here! What a pitiful terror seizes thee, the demigod! Where is the soul's calling? Where the breast that created a world in itself, and upbore and cherished it? which, with tremors of delight swelled to lift itself to a level with us, the Spirits. Where art thou, Faust? — whose voice rang to me, who pressed towards me with all his energies! Art thou he? thou, who, at the bare perception of my breath art shivering through all the depths of life, a trembling, writhing worm?

FAUST. Shall I yield to thee, child of fire? I am he, am Faust, thy equal.

SPIRIT.

In the tides of life,
In the storm of action,
I am tossed up and down,
I drift hither and thither,
Birth and grave,
An eternal sea,
A changeful weaving,
A glowing life —
Thus I work at the whizzing loom of time,
And weave the living clothing of the Deity.

FAUST. Busy Spirit, thou who sweepest round the wide world, how near I feel to thee!

SPIRIT. Thou art mate for the spirit whom thou conceivest, not for me. (*The Spirit vanishes.*)

FAUST, *collapsing*. Not for thee! For whom then? I, the image of the Deity, and not mate for even thee! (*A knocking at the door.*) Oh, death! I know it: that is my amanuensis. My fairest fortune is turned to naught. That the unidea'd groveller must disturb this fulness of visions! (*WAGNER enters in his dressing-gown and night-cap, with a lamp in his hand. FAUST turns round in displeasure.*)

WAGNER. Excuse me—I hear you declaiming; you were surely reading a Greek tragedy. I should like to improve myself in this art, for nowadays it influences a good deal. I have often heard say, a player might instruct a priest.

FAUST. Yes, when the priest is a player, as may likely enough come to pass occasionally.

WAGNER. Ah! when a man is so confined to his study, and hardly sees the world of a holiday—hardly through a telescope, only from afar—how is he to lead it by persuasion?

FAUST. If you do not feel it, you will not get it by hunting for it,—if it does not gush from the soul, and subdue the hearts of all hearers with original delight. Sit at it forever—glue together—cook up a hash from the feast of others, and blow the paltry flames out of your own little heap of ashes! You may gain the admiration of children and apes, if you have a stomach for it; but you will never touch the hearts of others, if it does not flow fresh from your own.

WAGNER. But it is elocution that makes the orator's success. I feel well that I am still far behindhand.

FAUST. Try what can be got by honest means.—Be no tinkling fool!—Reason and good sense express themselves with little art. And when you are seriously intent on saying something, is it necessary to hunt for words? Your speeches, I say, which are so highly polished, in which ye crisp the shreds of humanity, are unrefreshing as the mist-wind which whistles through the withered leaves in autumn.

WAGNER. Oh, God! art is long, and our life is short. Often, indeed, during my critical studies do I suffer both in head and heart. How hard it is to compass the means by which one mounts to the fountain-head; and before he has got half way, a poor devil must probably die!

Neo-classic

FAUST. Is parchment the holy well, a drink from which allays the thirst forever? Thou hast not gained the cordial, if it gushes not from thy own soul.

WAGNER. Excuse me! it is a great pleasure to transport one's self into the spirit of the times; to see how a wise man has thought before us, and to what a glorious height we have at last carried it.

FAUST. Oh, yes, far up to the very stars. My friend, the past ages are to us a book with seven seals. What you term the spirit of the times, is at bottom only your own spirit, in which the times are reflected. A miserable exhibition, too, it frequently is! One runs away from it at the first glance! A dirt-tub and a lumber-room! — and, at best, a puppet-show play, with fine pragmatistical saws, such as may happen to sound well in the mouths of the puppets!

WAGNER. But the world! the heart and mind of man! every one would like to know something about that.

FAUST. Ay, what is called knowing! Who dares call the child by its true name? The few who have ever known anything about it, who sillily enough did not keep a guard over their full hearts, who revealed what they had felt and seem to the multitude, — these, time immemorial, have been crucified and burned. I beg, friend — the night is far advanced — for the present we must break off.

WAGNER. I could fain have kept waking to converse with you so learnedly. To-morrow, however, the first day of Easter, permit me a question or two more. Zealously have I devoted myself to study. True I know much; but I would fain know all. (*Exit.*)

FAUST, *alone*. How all hope only quits not the brain, which clings perseveringly to trash, — gropes with greedy hand for treasures, and exults at finding earth-worms!

Dare such a human voice sound here, where all around me teemed with spirits? Yet, ah! this once I thank thee, thou poorest of all the sons of earth. Thou hast snatched me from despair, which had well-nigh got the better of sense. Alas! the vision was so giant-great that I felt quite shrunk into a dwarf.

I, formed in God's own image, who already thought myself near to the mirror of eternal truth; who revelled in heaven's lustre and clearness, with the earthly part of me stripped off; I, more than cherub, whose free spirit already, in its imaginative soarings, aspired to glide through nature's veins, and in creating, enjoy the life of gods —

THE TRAGEDY OF FAUST.

how must I atone for it! a thunder-word has swept wide away.

I dare not presume to mate myself with thee. If I had possessed the power to draw thee to me, I had no power to hold thee. In that blest moment, I felt so little, so great; you fiercely thrust me back upon the uncertain lot of humanity. Who will teach me? What am I to shun? Must I obey that impulse? Alas! our actions, equally with our sufferings, clog the course of our lives.

Something foreign, and more foreign, is ever clinging to the noblest conception the mind can form. When we have attained to the good of this world, what is better is termed ~~falsehood and vanity~~. The glorious feelings which gave us life grow torpid in the worldly throng.

If phantasy at one time, on daring wing and full of hope, dilates to infirmity, — a little space is now enough for her, when venture after venture has been wrecked in the whirlpool of time. Care straightway builds her nest in the depth of the heart, hatches vague tortures there, rocks herself restlessly, and frightens joy and peace away. She is ever putting on some new mask; she may appear as house and land, as wife and child, as fire, water, dagger, poison. You tremble before all that does not befall you, and must be always wailing what you never lose.

I am not like the heavenly essences; I feel it but too deeply. I am like the worm, which drags itself through the dust, — which, as it seeks its living in the dust, is crushed and buried by the step of the passer-by.

Is it not dust? all that in a hundred shelves contracts this lofty wall — the frippery, which, with its thousand forms of emptiness, cramps me up in this world of moths? Is this the place for finding what I want? Must I go on reading, in a thousand books, that men have everywhere been miserable, and now and then there has been a happy one?

Thou hollow skull, what mean'st thou by that grin? but that thy brain, like mine, was once bewildered, — sought the bright day, and, with an ardent longing after truth, went miserably astray in the twilight?

Ye instruments, too, forsooth, are mocking me, with your wheels and cogs, cylinders and collars. I stood at the gate, ye were to be the key; true, your wards are curiously twisted, but you raise not the bolt. Inscrutable at broad day, nature does not suffer herself to be robbed of her veil;

THE TRAGEDY OF FAUST.

what she does not choose to reveal to thy mind thou not wrest from her by levers and screws. Thou, antiquated lumber, which I have never used, thou art here, only because my father had occasion for you. Thou, old roll, hast been growing smoke-besmeared since the dim lamp first smouldered at this desk. Far better would it be for me to have squandered away the little I possess than to be sweating here under the burden of that little. To possess what thou hast inherited from thy sires, enjoy it. What one does not profit by, is an oppressive burden; what the moment brings forth, that only can it profit by.

But why are my looks fastened on that spot? is that phial there a magnet to my eyes? Why, of a sudden, is all so exquisitely bright, as when the moonlight breathes round one benighted in the wood? I hail thee, thou precious phial, which I now take down with reverence; in thee I honor the wit and art of man. Thou abstraction of kind soporific juices, thou concentration of all refined deadly essences, vouchsafe thy master a token of thy grace! I see thee, and the pang is mitigated; I grasp thee, and the struggle abates; the spirit's flood-tide ebbs by degrees. I am beckoned out into the wide sea; the glassy wave glitters at my feet; another day invites to other shores. A chariot of fire waves, on light pinions, down to me. I feel prepared to permeate the realms of space on a new track, to new spheres of pure activity. This sublime existence, this godlike beatitude! And thou, worm as thou wert but now, dost thou merit it? Ay, only resolutely turn thy back on the lovely sun of this earth! Dare to tear up the gates which each willingly slinks by! Now is the time to show by deeds that man's dignity yields not to God's sublimity,—to quail not in the presence of that dark abyss, in which phantasy damns itself to its own torments—to struggle onwards to that pass, round whose narrow mouth all Hell is flaming; calmly to resolve upon the step, even at the risk of dropping into nothingness.

Now come down, pure crystal goblet, on which I have not thought for many a year, — forth from your old receptacle! You glittered at my father's festivities; you gladdened the grave guests, as one pledged you to the other. The gorgeousness of the many artfully-wrought images, — the drinker's duty to explain them in rhyme, and empty the contents at a draught, — remind me of many a night of my

youth. I shall not now pass you to a neighbor; I shall not now display my wit on your devices. Here is a juice which soon intoxicates. It fills your cavity with its brown flood. Be this last draught — which I have brewed, which I choose — quaffed, with my whole soul, as a solemn festal greeting to the morn. (*He places the goblet to his mouth.*)

(*The ringing of bells and singing of choruses.*)

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ has arisen!
Joy to the mortal,
Whom the corrupting,
Creeping, hereditary
Imperfections enveloped.

FAUST. What deep humming, what clear strain, draws irresistibly the goblet from my mouth? Are ye hollow sounding bells already proclaiming the first festal hour of Easter? Are ye choruses already singing the comforting hymn, which once, round the night of the sepulchre, pealed forth, from angel lips, the assurance of a new covenant?

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

With spices
Had we embalmed him;
We, his faithful ones,
Had laid him out.
Clothes and bands
Cleanlily swathed we round;
Ah! and we find
Christ no longer here!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen!
Happy the loving one,
Who the afflicting,
Wholesome and chastening
Trial hath stood!

FAUST. Why, ye heavenly tones, subduing and soft, do you seek me out in the dust? Peal out, where weak men are to be found! I hear the message, but want faith. I dare not aspire to those spheres from whence the glad tidings sound; and yet, accustomed to this sound from infancy, it even now calls me back to life. In other days, the kiss of heavenly love descended upon me in the solemn stillness of the Sabbath; then the full-toned bell sounded so fraught with mystic meaning, and a prayer was burning en-

joyment. A longing, inconceivably sweet, drove me forth to wander over wood and plain, and amidst a thousand burning tears, I felt a world rise up to me. This anthem harbingered the gay sports of youth, the unchecked happiness of spring festivity. — Recollection now holds me back, with childlike feeling, from the last decisive step. Oh! sound on, ye sweet heavenly strains! The tear is flowing, earth has me again.

CHORUS OF DISCIPLES.

The Buried One,
Already on high,
Living, sublime,
Has gloriously raised himself!
He is, in reviving bliss,
Near to creating joy.
Ah! on earth's bosom
Are we for suffering here.
He left us, his own,
Languishing here below!
Alas! we weep over,
Master, thy happy lot.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen
Out of corruption's lap.
Joyfully tear yourselves
Loose from your bonds!
Ye, in deeds giving praise to him
Love manifesting,
Living brethren-like,
Travelling and preaching him,
Bliss promising —
You is the Master nigh,
For you is he here!

BEFORE THE GATE.

Promenaders of all kinds pass out.

SOME MECHANICS. Why that way?

OTHERS. We are going up to Jagerhaus.

THE FORMER. But we are going to the mill.

A MECHANIC. I advise you to go to the Wasserhof.

A SECOND. The road is not pleasant.

THE OTHERS. What shall you do?

A THIRD. I am going with the others.

A FOURTH. Come up to Burgdorf; you are there sure of finding the prettiest girls and best beer, and rows of the first order.

A FIFTH. You wild fellow, is your skin itching for the third time? I don't like going there; I have a horror of the place.

SERVANT GIRL. No, no, I shall return to the town.

ANOTHER. We shall find him to a certainty by those poplars.

THE FIRST. That is no great gain for me. He will walk by your side. With you alone does he dance upon the green. What have I to do with your pleasures?

THE SECOND. He is sure not to be alone to-day. The curly head, he said, would be with him.

STUDENT. The devil! how the brave wenches step out; come along, brother, we must go with them. Strong beer, stinging tobacco, and a girl in full trim, — that now is my taste.

CITIZENS' DAUGHTERS. Now do you but look at those fine lads! It is really a shame. They might have the best of company, and are running after these servant-girls.

SECOND STUDENT TO THE FIRST. Not so fast! there are two coming up behind; they are trimly dressed out. One of them is my neighbor; I have a great liking for the girl. They are walking in their quiet way, and yet will suffer us to join them in the end.

THE FIRST. No, brother. I do not like to be under restraint. Quick, lest we lose the game. The hand that twirls the mop on a Saturday will fondle you best on Sundays.

TOWNSMAN. No, the new Burgomaster is not to my taste; now that he has become so, he is daily getting bolder; and what is he doing for the town? Is it not growing worse every day? One is obliged to submit to more restraints than ever, and pay more than in any time before.

BEGGAR, *sings*. Ye good gentlemen, ye lovely ladies, so trimly dressed and rosy cheeked, be pleased to look upon me, to regard and relieve my wants. Do not suffer me to sing here in vain. The free-handed only is light-hearted. Be the day, which is a holiday to all, a harvest-day to me.

ANOTHER TOWNSMAN. I know nothing better on Sundays and holidays than a chat of war and war's alarms, when people are fighting, behind, far away in Turkey. A

man stands at the window, takes off his glass, and sees the painted vessels glide down the river; then returns home glad at heart at eve, and blesses peace and times of peace.

THIRD TOWNSMAN. Ay, neighbor, I have no objection to that; they may break one another's heads, and turn everything topsy turvy, for aught I care, only let things at home remain as they are.

AN OLD WOMAN TO THE CITIZENS' DAUGHTERS. Hey-dey: how smart! the pretty young creatures. Who would not fall in love with you? Only not so proud! it is all very well; and what you wish, I should know how to put you in the way of getting.

CITIZEN'S DAUGHTER. Come along, Agatha. I take care not to be seen with such witches in public; true, on St. Andrew's eve, she showed me my future sweetheart in flesh and blood.

THE OTHER. She showed me mine in the glass, soldier-like, with other bold fellows; I looked around, I seek him everywhere, but I can never meet with him.

SOLDIER.

Towns with lofty
Walls and battlements
Maidens with proud
Scornful thoughts,
I fain would win.
Bold the adventure,
Noble the reward.

And the trumpets
Are our summoners
As to joy
So to death.
That is storming,
That is life for you!

Maidens and towns
Must surrender.
Bold the adventure,
Noble the reward —
And the soldiers
Are off.

FAUST *and* WAGNER.

FAUST. River and rivulet are freed from ice by the gay, quickening glance of the spring. The joys of hope are budding in the dale. Old Winter, in his weakness, has retreated to the bleak mountains; from thence he sends, in his flight, nothing but impotent showers of hail, in flakes, over the

green-growing meadows. But the Sun endures no white. Production and growth are everywhere stirring; he is about to enliven everything with colors. The landscape wants flowers; he takes gaily-dressed men and women instead. Turn and look back, from this rising ground, upon the town. Forth from the gloomy portal presses a motley crowd. Every one suns himself so willingly to-day. They celebrate the rising of the Lord, for they themselves have arisen; — from the damp rooms of mean houses, from the bondage of mechanical drudgery, from the confinement of gables and roofs, from the stifling narrowness of streets, from the venerable gloom of churches, are they raised up to the open light of day. But look, look! how quickly the mass scatters itself through the gardens and fields; how the river, broad and long, tosses many a merry bark upon its surface, and how this last wherry, overladen almost to sinking, moves off! Even from the farthest paths of the mountain gay-colored dresses glance upon us. I hear already the bustle of the village; this is the true heaven of the multitude; big and little are huzzaing joyously. Here, I am a man — here I may be one.

WAGNER. To walk with you, Sir Doctor, is honor and profit. But I would not lose myself alone, because I am an enemy to coarseness of every sort. Fiddling, shouting, skittle-playing, are sounds thoroughly detestable to me. People run riot as if the devil was driving them, and call it merriment, call it singing.

Rustics under the Lime Tree.

DANCE AND SONG.

The swain dressed himself out for the dance.
With parti-colored jacket, ribbon and garland,
Smartly was he dressed!
The ring round the lime-tree was already full,
And all were dancing like mad.

Huzza! Huzza!
Tira-lira-hara-la!
Merrily went the fiddle-stick.

He pressed eagerly in,
Gave a maiden a push
With his elbow:
The buxom girl turned round
And said — “Now that I call stupid.”

Huzza! Huzza!
Tira-lira-hara-la!
“Don’t be so rude.”

Yet nimbly sped it in the ring;
 They turned right, they turned left,
 And all the petticoats were flying.
 They grew red, they grew warm,
 And rested panting arm-in-arm,
 Huzza! Huzza!
 Tira-lira-hara-la!
 And elbow on the hip.

“Have done now! don’t be so fond!
 How many a man has cajoled and
 Deceived his betrothed!”
 But he coaxed her aside,
 And far and wide echoed from the lime-tree
 Huzza! Huzza!
 Tira-lira-hara-la!
 Shouts and fiddle-sticks.

OLD PEASANT. Doctor, this is really good of you, not to scorn us to-day, and, great scholar as you are, to mingle in this crowd. Take, then, the fairest jug, which we have filled with fresh liquor: I pledge you in it, and pray aloud that it may do more than quench your thirst — may the number of drops which it holds be added to your days!

FAUST. I accept the refreshing draught, and wish you all health and happiness in return. (*The people collect round him.*)

OLD PEASANT. Of a surety it is well done of you to appear on this glad day. You have been our friend in evil days, too, before now. Many a one stands here alive whom your father tore from the hot fever’s rage, when he stayed the pestilence. You, too, at that time a young man, went into every sick house: many a dead body was borne forth, but you came out safe. You endured many a sore trial. The Helper above helped the helper.

ALL. Health to the tried friend — may he long have the power to help!

FAUST. Bend before Him on high, who teaches how to help, and sends help. (*He proceeds with Wagner.*)

WAGNER. What a feeling, great man, must you experience at the honors paid you by this multitude! Oh, happy he who can turn his gifts to so good an account! The father points you out to his boy; all ask, and press, and hurry round. The fiddle stops, the dancer pauses. As you go by, they range themselves in rows, caps fly into the air, and they all but bend the knee as if the Host were passing.

FAUST. Only a few steps further, up to that stone yonder! Here we will rest from our walk. Here many a time have I

sat, thoughtful and solitary, and mortified myself with prayer and fasting. Rich in hope, firm in faith, I thought to extort the stoppage of that pestilence from the Lord of heaven with tears, and sighs, and wringing of hands. The applause of the multitude now sounds like derision in my ears. Oh! couldst thou read in my soul how little father and son merited such an honor! My father was a worthy, sombre man, who, honestly but in his own way, meditated, with whimsical application, on nature and her hallowed circles; who, in the company of adepts, shut himself up in the dark laboratory, and fused contraries together after numberless recipes. There was a red lion, a bold lover, married to the lily in the tepid bath, and then both, with open flame, tortured from one bridal chamber to another. If the young queen, with varied hues, then appeared in the glass — this was the medicine; the patients died, and no one inquired who recovered. Thus did we, with our hellish electuaries, rage in these vales and mountains far worse than the pestilence. I myself have given the poison to thousands; they pined away, and I must survive to hear the reckless murderers praised!

WAGNER. How can you make yourself uneasy on that account? Is it not enough for a good man to practise conscientiously and scrupulously the art that has been entrusted to him? If, in youth, you honor your father, you will willingly learn from him: if, in manhood, you extend the bonds of knowledge, your son may mount still higher than you.

FAUST. Oh, happy he, who can still hope to emerge from this sea of error! We would use the very thing we know not, and cannot use what we know. But let us not embitter the blessing of this hour by such melancholy reflections. See, how the green-girt cottages shimmer in the setting Sun! He bends and sinks — the day is over-lived. Yonder he hurries off, and quickens other life. Oh! that I have no wing to lift me from the ground, to struggle after, forever after, him! I should see, in everlasting evening beams, the stilly world at my feet, — every height on fire, — every vale in repose, — the silver brook flowing into golden streams. The rugged mountain, with all its dark defiles, would not then break my god-like course. Already the sea, with its heated bays, opens on my enraptured sight. Yet, the god seems at last to sink away. But the new impulse wakes. I hurry on to drink his everlasting light, — the day before me and the night behind — the heavens above, and

under me the waves. A glorious dream! as it is passing, he is gone. Alas! no bodily wing will so easily keep pace with the wings of the mind. Yet it is the inborn tendency of our being for feeling to strive upwards and onwards; when, over us, lost in the blue expanse, the lark sings its trilling lay: when, over rugged, pine-covered heights, the outspread eagle soars; and, over marsh and sea, the crane struggles onward to her home.

WAGNER. I myself have often had my capricious moments, but I never yet experienced an impulse of the kind. One soon looks one's fill of woods and fields. I shall never envy the wings of the bird. How differently the pleasures of the mind bear us, from book to book, from page to page! With them, winter nights become cheerful and bright, a happy life warms every limb, and, ah! when you actually unroll a precious manuscript, all heaven comes down to you.

FAUST. Thou art conscious only of one impulse. Oh, never became acquainted with the other! Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast; the one struggles to separate itself from the other. The one clings with persevering fondness to the world, with organs like cramps of steel; the other lifts itself energetically from the mist to the realms of an exalted ancestry. Oh! if there be spirits hovering in the air, ruling 'twixt earth and heaven, descend ye, from your golden atmosphere, and lead me off to a new, variegated life! Ay, were but a magic mantle mine, and could it bear me into foreign lands, I would not part with it for the costliest garments — not for a king's mantle.

WAGNER. Invoke not the well-known troop, which diffuses itself, streaming, through the atmosphere, and prepares danger in a thousand forms, from every quarter, to man. The sharp-fanged spirits, with arrowy tongues, press upon you from the north; from the east, they come parching, and feed upon your lungs. If the south sends from the desert those which heap fire after fire upon thy brain, the west brings the swarm which only refreshes to drown fields, meadows, and yourself. They are fond of listening, ever keenly alive for mischief: they obey with pleasure, because they take pleasure to delude: they feign to be sent from heaven, and lisp like angels when they lie. But let us be going; the earth is already grown gray, the air is chill, the mist is falling; it is only in the evening that we set a proper value on our homes. Why do you stand still and gaze with

astonishment thus? What can thus attract your attention in the gloaming?

FAUST. Seest thou the black dog ranging through the corn and stubble?

WAGNER. I saw him long ago; he did not strike me as anything particular.

FAUST. Mark him well! for what do you take the brute?

WAGNER. For a poodle, who, poodle-fashion, is puzzling out the track of his master.

FAUST. Dost thou mark how, in wide spiral curves, he quests round and ever nearer us? and, if I err not, a line of fire follows upon his track.

WAGNER. I see nothing but a black poodle; you may be deceived by some optical illusion.

FAUST. It appears to me that he is drawing light magical nooses, to form a toil around our feet.

WAGNER. I see him bounding hesitatingly and shyly around us, because, instead of his master, he sees two strangers.

FAUST. The circle grows narrow; he is already close.

WAGNER. You see it is a dog, and no spirit. He growls and hesitates, crouches on his belly and wags with his tail—all as dogs are wont to do.

FAUST. Come to us!—Hither!

WAGNER. It's a droll creature. Stand still, and he will sit on his hind legs; speak to him, and he will jump up on you; lose aught, and he will fetch it to you, and jump into the water for your stick.

FAUST. I believe you are right; I find no trace of a spirit, and all is the result of training.

WAGNER. Even a wise man may become attached to a dog when he is well brought up. And he richly deserves all your favor,—he, the accomplished pupil of your students, as he is. (*They enter the gate of the town.*)

STUDY.

FAUST (*entering with the poodle*). I have left plain and meadow veiled in deep night, which wakes the better soul within us with a holy feeling of foreboding awe. Wild desires are now sunk in sleep, with every deed of violence:

the love of man is stirring—the love of God is stirring now.

Be quiet, poodle, run not hither and thither. What are you snuffing at on the threshold? Lie down behind the stove; there is my best cushion for you. As without, upon the mountain-path, you amused us by running and gambolling, so now receive my kindness as a welcome quiet guest.

Ah! when the lamp is burning again friendly in our narrow cell, then all becomes clear in our bosom,—in the heart that knows itself. Reason begins to speak, and hope to bloom, again; we yearn for the streams—oh, yes! for the fountain of life.

Growl not, poodle; the brutish sound ill harmonizes with the hallowed tones which now possess my whole soul. We are accustomed to see men deride what they do not understand—to see them snarl at the good and beautiful, which is often troublesome to them. Is the dog disposed to snarl at it like them? But, ah! I feel already that, much as I may wish for it, contentment wells no longer from my breast. Yet why must the stream be so soon dried up, and we again lie thirsting? I have had so much experience of that! This want, however, admits of being compensated. We learn to prize that which is not of this earth; we long for revelation, which nowhere burns more majestically or more beautifully than in the new Testament. I feel impelled to open the original text—to translate for once, with upright feeling, the sacred original into my darling German. (*He opens a volume, and disposes himself for the task.*)

It is written: "In the beginning was the Word." Here I am already at a stand—who will help me on? I cannot possibly value the Word so highly; I must translate it differently, if I am truly inspired by the spirit. It is written: "In the beginning was the Sense." Consider well the first line, that your pen be not over-hasty. Is it the sense that influences and produces everything? It should stand thus: "In the beginning was the Power." Yet, even as I am writing down this, something warns me not to keep to it. The spirit comes to my aid! At once I see my way, and write confidently: "In the beginning was the Deed."

If I am to share the chamber with you, poodle, cease your howling—cease your barking. I cannot endure so troublesome a companion near to me. One of us two must quit the cell. It is with reluctance that I withdraw the rites of

hospitality; the door is open — the way is clear for you. But what do I see? Can that come to pass by natural means? Is it shadow — is it reality? How long and broad my poodle grows! He raises himself powerfully; that is not the form of a dog! What a phantom I have brought into the house! — he looks already like a hippopotamus, with fiery eyes, terrific teeth. Ah! I am sure of thee! Solomon's key is good for such a half-hellish brood.

SPIRITS IN THE PASSAGE.

One is caught within!
 Stay without, follow none!
 As in the gin the fox,
 Quakes an old lynx of hell.
 But take heed!
 Hover hither, hover back,
 Up and down,
 And he is loose!
 If ye can aid him,
 Leave him not in the lurch,
 For he has already done
 Much to serve us.

FAUST.

First to confront the beast,
 Use I the spell of the four:
 Salamander shall grow,
 Undine twine,
 Sylph vanish,
 Kobold stir himself.
 Who did not know
 The elements,
 Their power and properties,
 Were no master
 Over the spirits.
 Vanish in flame,
 Salamander!
 Rushingly flow together
 Undine!
 Shine in meteor beauty,
 Sylph!
 Bring homely help,
 Incubus! Incubus!
 Step forth and make an end of it.

No one of the four sticks in the beast. He lies undisturbed and grins at me. I have not yet made him feel. Thou shalt hear me conjure stronger.

Art thou, fellow,
 A scapeling from hell?
 Then see this sign!
 To which bend the dark troop.

He is already swelling, and bristling his hair.

Reprobate!
Canst thou read him? —
The unoriginated,
Unpronounceable,
Through all heaven diffused,
Vilely transpierced?

Driven behind the stove, it is swelling like an elephant; it fills the whole space; it is about to vanish in the mist. Rise not to the ceiling! Down at thy master's feet! Thou seest I do not threaten in vain. I will scorch thee with holy fire. Wait not for the thrice-glowing light. Wait not for the strongest of my spells.

MEPHISTOPHELES. (*Comes forward as the mist sinks, in the dress of a travelling scholar, from behind the stove.*) Wherefore such a fuss? What may be your pleasure?

FAUST. This, then, was the kernel of the poodle. A travelling scholar? The *casus* makes me laugh.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I salute your learned worship. You have made me sweat with a vengeance.

FAUST. What is thy name?

MEPHISTOPHELES. The question strikes me as trifling for one who rates the Word so low; who, far estranged from all mere outward seeming, looks only to the essence of things.

FAUST. With such gentlemen as you one may generally learn the essence from the name, since it appears but too plainly if your name be fly-god, destroyer, liar. Now, in a word, who art thou, then?

MEPHISTOPHELES. A part of that power which is ever willing evil and ever producing good.

FAUST. What is meant by this riddle?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am the spirit that constantly denies, and that rightly; for everything that has originated, deserves to be annihilated. Therefore, better were it that nothing should originate. Thus, all that you call sin, destruction, in a word, Evil, is my proper element.

FAUST. You call yourself a part, and yet stand whole before me.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I tell thee the modest truth. Although man, that microcosm of folly, commonly esteems himself a whole, I am a part of the part which in the beginning was all; a part of the darkness which brought forth light, — the proud light, which now contests her ancient rank and space with mother night. But he succeeds not; since, strive as he

will, he cleaves, as if bound, to bodies, he streams from bodies, he gives beauty to bodies, a body stops him in his course, and so, I hope, he will perish with bodies before long.

FAUST. Now I know thy dignified calling. Thou art not able to destroy on a great scale, and so art just beginning on a small one.

MEPHISTOPHELES. And, to say truth, I have made little progress in it. That which is opposed to nothing—the something, this clumsy world, much as I have tried already, I have not yet learnt how to come at it, — with waves, storms, earthquakes, fire. Sea and land remain undisturbed, after all! And the damned set, the brood of brutes and men, there is no such thing as getting the better of them, neither. How many I have already buried! And new, fresh blood is constantly circulating! Things go on so—it is enough to make one mad! From air, water, earth, in wet, dry, hot, cold—germs by thousands evolve themselves. Had I not reserved fire, I should have nothing apart for myself.

FAUST. So thou opposest thy cold devil's fist, clenched in impotent malice, to the ever-stirring, the beneficent creating power. Try thy hand at something else, wondrous son of Chaos.

MEPHISTOPHELES. We will think about it in good earnest—more of that anon! Might I be permitted this time to depart?

FAUST. I see not why you ask. I have now made acquaintance with you; call on me in future as you feel inclined. Here is the window, here the door; there is also a chimney for you.

MEPHISTOPHELES. To confess the truth, a small obstacle prevents me from walking out—the wizard-foot upon your threshold.

FAUST. The Pentagram embarrasses you? Tell me, then, thou child of hell, if that repels thee, how camest thou in? How was such a spirit entrapped?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Mark it well; it is not well drawn; one angle, the outward one, is, as thou seest, a little open.

FAUST. It is a lucky accident. Thou shouldst be my prisoner, then? This is a chance hit.

MEPHISTOPHELES. The poodle observed nothing when he jumped in. The thing looks differently now; the devil cannot get out.

FAUST. But why do you not go through the window?

MEPHISTOPHELES. It is a law, binding on devils and phantoms, that they must go out the same way they stole in. The first is free to us; we are slaves as regards the second.

FAUST. Hell itself has its laws? I am glad of it; in that case a compact, a binding one, may be made with you gentlemen?

MEPHISTOPHELES. What is promised, that shalt thou enjoy to the letter; not the smallest deduction shall be made from it. But this is not to be discussed so summarily, and we will speak of it the next time. But I must earnestly beg of you to let me go this once.

FAUST. Wait yet another moment, and tell me something worth telling.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Let me go now! I will soon come back; you may then question me as you like.

FAUST. I have laid no snare for thee; thou hast run into the net of thy own free will. Let whoever has got hold of the devil keep hold of him; he will not catch him a second time in a hurry.

MEPHISTOPHELES. If you like, I am ready to stay and keep you company here, but upon condition that I may beguile the time properly for you by my arts.

FAUST. I shall attend with pleasure; you may do so, provided only that the art be an agreeable one.

MEPHISTOPHELES. My friend, you will gain more for your senses in this one hour than in the whole year's monotony. What the delicate spirits sing to you, the lovely images which they call up, are not an unsubstantial play of enchantment. Your smell will be charmed, you will then delight your palate, and then your feelings will be entranced. No preparation is necessary; we are all assembled — strike up!

SPIRITS.

Vanish, ye dark
 Arched ceilings above,
 More charmingly look in
 The friendly blue sky,
 Were the dark clouds
 Melted away.
 Little stars sparkle,
 Softer suns shine in.
 Ethereal beauty
 Of the children of heaven,
 Tremulous bending
 Hovers across;
 Longing desire
 Follows after.

And the fluttering
 Ribbons of drapery
 Cover the plains,
 Cover the bower,
 Where lovers,
 Deep in thought,
 Give themselves for life,
 Bower on bower!
 Sprouting tendrils!
 Down-weighting grapes
 Gush into the vat
 Of the hard-squeezing press.
 The foaming wines
 Gush in brooks,
 Rustle through
 Pure, precious stones,
 Leave the heights
 Behind them lying,
 Broaden to seas
 Around the charm of
 Green-growing hill.
 And the winged throng
 Sips happiness,
 Flies to meet the sun,
 Flies to meet the bright
 Isles, which dancingly
 Float on the waves;
 Where we hear
 Shouting in choruses,
 Where we see
 Dancers on meads;
 In the open air
 All disporting alike.
 Some are clambering
 Over the heights,
 Others are swimming
 Over the seas,
 Others are hovering —
 All towards the life,
 All towards the far away
 Loving stars of
 Bliss-giving grace.

MEPHISTOPHELES. He slumbers! Well done, my airy,
 delicate youngsters! Ye have fairly sung him to sleep. I
 am your debtor for this concert. Thou art not yet the man
 to hold fast the devil! Play round him with sweet dreamy
visions; plunge him in a sea of illusion. But to break the
 spell of this threshold I need a rat's tooth. I have not to
 conjure long; one is already rustling hither, and will hear
 me in a moment. The lord of rats and mice, of flies, frogs,
 bugs, and lice, commands thee to venture forth and gnaw this
 threshold so soon as he has smeared it with oil. Thou

comest hopping forth already! Instantly to the work! The point which repelled me is towards the front on the ledge; one bite more, and it is done.—Now, Faust, dream on, till we meet again.

FAUST, *waking*. Am I, then, once again deceived? Does the throng of spirits vanish thus? Was it in a lying dream that the devil appeared to me, and was it a poodle that escaped?

STUDY.

FAUST; MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST. Does any one knock? Come in! Who wants to disturb me again?

MEPHISTOPHELES. It is I.

FAUST. Come in.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You must say so three times.

FAUST. Come in, then!

MEPHISTOPHELES. So far, so good. We shall go on very well together, I hope; for, to chase away your fancies, I am here, like a youth of condition, in a coat of scarlet laced with gold, a mantle of stiff silk, a cock's feather in my hat, and a long pointed sword at my side. And, to make no more words about it, my advice to you is to array yourself in the same manner immediately, that, unrestrained, emancipated, you may try what life is.

FAUST. In every dress, I dare say, I shall feel the torture of the contracted life of this earth. I am too old for mere play, too young to be without a wish. What can the world afford me?—"Thou shalt renounce!" "Thou shalt renounce!"—That is the eternal song which is rung in every one's ears; which, our whole life long, every hour is hoarsely singing to us. In the morning I wake only to horror. I would fain weep bitter tears to see the day, which, in its course, will not accomplish a wish for me; no, not one; which, with wayward captiousness, weakens even the presentiment of every joy, and disturbs the creation of my busy breast by a thousand ugly realities. Then again, at the approach of night, I must stretch myself in anguish on my couch; here, too, no rest is vouchsafed to me; wild dreams are sure to harrow me up. The God that dwells in my bosom, that can

stir my inmost soul, that sways all my energies — he is powerless as regards things without; and thus existence is a load to me, death an object of earnest prayer, and life detestable.

MEPHISTOPHELES. And yet death is never an entirely welcome guest.

FAUST. Oh! happy the man around whose brow he wreathes the bloody laurel in the glitter of victory — whom, after the maddening dance, he finds in a maiden's arms. Oh, that I had sunk away, enrapt, exanimate, before the great spirit's power.

MEPHISTOPHELES. And yet a certain person did not drink a certain brown juice on a certain night.

FAUST. Playing the spy, it seems, is thy amusement.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am not omniscient, but I know much.

FAUST. Since a sweet familiar tone drew me from those thronging horrors, and played on what of childlike feeling remained in me with the concording note of happier times, — my curse on everything that entwines the soul with its jugglery, and chains it to this den of wretchedness with blinding and flattering influences. Accursed, first, be the lofty opinion in which the mind wraps itself! Accursed, the blinding of appearances, by which our senses are oppressed! Accursed, what plays the pretender to us in dreams, — the cheat of glory, of the lasting of a name! Accursed, who flatters us as property, as wife and child, as slave and plough! Accursed be Mammon when he stirs us to bold deeds with treasures, when he smooths our couch for indolent delight! Accursed, the balsam-juice of the grape! Accursed, that highest grace of love! Accursed be Hope, accursed be Faith, and accursed, above all, be Patience!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS (*invisible*).

Woe, woe,
Thou hast destroyed it,
The beautiful world,
With violent hands;
It tumbles, it falls abroad.
A demi-god has shattered it to pieces!
We bear away
The wrecks into nothingness,
And wail over
The beauty that is lost.
Mighty
Among the sons of earth,
Proudlie
Build it again,
Build it up in thy bosom!

A new career of life,
 With unstained sense
 Begin,
 And new lays
 Shall peal out thereupon.

MEPHISTOPHELES. These are the little ones of my train. Listen, how, with wisdom beyond their years, they counsel you to pleasure and action. Out into the world, away from solitariness, where the senses and the juices of life stagnate — would they fain lure you. Cease to trifle with your grief, which, like the vulture, feeds upon your vitals. The worst company will make you feel that you are a man amongst men. Yet I do not mean to thrust you amongst the pack. I am none of your great men ; but if, united with me, you will wend your way through life, I will readily accommodate myself to be yours upon the spot. I am your companion ; and, if it suits you, your servant, your slave !

FAUST. And what am I to do for you in return ?

MEPHISTOPHELES. For that you have still a long day of grace.

FAUST. No, no ; the devil is an egotist, and is not likely to do for God's sake what may advantage another. Speak the condition plainly out ; such a servant is a dangerous inmate.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I will bind myself to your service *here*, and never sleep nor slumber at your call. When we meet on *the other side*, you shall do as much for me.

FAUST. I care little about *the other side* ; if you first knock this world to pieces, the other may arise afterwards if it will. My joys flow from this earth, and this sun shines upon my sufferings : if I can only separate myself from them, what will and can may come to pass. I will hear no more about it — whether there be hating and loving in the world to come, and whether there be an Above or Below in those spheres like our own.

MEPHISTOPHELES. In this sense, you may venture. Bind yourself ; and during these days you shall be delighted by my arts ; I will give thee what no human being ever saw yet.

FAUST. What, poor devil, wilt thou give ? Was the mind of a man, in its high aspiring, ever comprehended by the like of thee ? But if thou hast food which never satisfies ; ruddy gold, which, volatile like quicksilver, melts away in the hand ; a game at which one never wins ; a maiden, who, on

my breast, is already ogling my neighbor; the bright god-like joy of honor, which vanishes like a meteor! — Show me the fruit that rots before it is plucked, and trees which every day grow green anew.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Such a task affrights me not. I have such treasures at my disposal. But, my good friend, the time will come round when we may feast on what is really good in peace.

FAUST. If ever I stretch myself, calm and composed, upon a couch, be there at once an end of me. If thou canst ever flatteringly delude me into being pleased with myself — if thou canst cheat me with enjoyment, be that day my last. I offer the wager.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Done!

FAUST. And my hand upon it! If I ever say to the passing moment — “Stay, thou art so fair!” then mayest thou cast me into chains; then will I readily perish; then may the death-bell toll; then art thou free from thy service. The clock may stand, the index hand may fall: be time a thing no more for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Think well of it; we shall bear it in mind.

FAUST. You have a perfect right so to do. I have formed no rash estimate of myself. As I remain I am a slave; what care I whether thine or another's?

MEPHISTOPHELES. This very day, at the doctor's feast, I shall enter upon my duty as servant. Only one thing — to guard against accidents, I must trouble you for a line or two.

FAUST. Pedant, dost thou, too, require writing? Hast thou never known man nor man's word? Is it not enough that my word of mouth disposes of my days for all eternity? Does not the world rave on in all its currents, and am I to be bound by a promise? Yet this prejudice is implanted in our hearts: who would willingly free himself from it? Happy the man who bears truth pure in his breast; he will never have cause to repent any sacrifice! But a parchment, written and stamped, is a spectre which all shrink from. The word dies away in the very pen; in wax and leather is the mastery. What, evil spirit, wouldst thou of me? Brass, marble, parchment, paper? Shall I write with style, graver, pen? I leave the choice to thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES. How can you put yourself in a passion and overwork your oratory in this manner? Any scrap will do: you will subscribe your name with a drop of blood.

FAUST. If this will fully satisfy you, the whim shall be complied with.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Blood is quite a peculiar sort of juice.

FAUST. But fear not that I shall break this compact. What I promise, is precisely what all my energies are striving for. I have aspired too high: I belong only to thy class. The Great Spirit has spurned me; Nature shuts herself against me. The thread of thought is snapped; I have long loathed every sort of knowledge. Let us quench our glowing passions in the depths of sensuality; let every wonder be forthwith prepared beneath the hitherto impervious veil of sorcery. Let us cast ourselves into the rushing of time, into the rolling of accident. There pain and pleasure, success and disappointment, may succeed each other as they will — man's proper element is restless activity.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Nor end nor limit is prescribed to you. If it is your pleasure to sip the sweets of everything, to snatch at all as you fly by, much good may it do you — only fall to, and don't be coy.

FAUST. I tell thee again, pleasure is not the question: I devote myself to the intoxicating whirl; — to the most agonizing enjoyment — to enamored hate — to animating vexation. My breast, cured of the thirst of knowledge, shall henceforth bare itself to every pang. I will enjoy in my own heart's core all that is parcelled out amongst mankind; grapple in spirit with the highest and deepest; heap the weal and woe of the whole race upon my breast, and thus dilate my own individuality to theirs and perish also, in the end, like them.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Oh, believe me, who many thousand years have chewed the cud on this hard food, that, from the cradle to the bier, no human being digests the old leaven. Believe a being like me, this Whole is only made for a god. *He* exists in an eternal halo; *us* he has brought forth in darkness; and only day and night are proper for *you*.

FAUST. But I will.

MEPHISTOPHELES. That is well enough to say! But I am only troubled about one thing; time is short, art is long. I should suppose you would suffer yourself to be instructed. Take a poet to counsel; make the gentleman set his imagination at work, and heap all noble qualities on your honored head, — the lion's courage, the stag's swiftness, the fiery blood of the Italian, the enduring firmness of the North. Make him find out the secret of combining magnanimity

with cunning, and of being in love, after a set plan, with the burning desires of youth. I myself should like to know such a gentleman — I would call him Mr. Microcosm.

FAUST. What, then, am I, if it be not possible to attain the crown of humanity, which every sense is striving for?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Thou art in the end — what thou art. Put on wigs with millions of curls — set thy foot upon all-high socks, — thou abidest ever what thou art.

FAUST. I feel it; in vain have I scraped together and accumulated all the treasures of the human mind upon myself; and when I sit down at the end, still no new power wells up within: I am not a hair's breadth higher, nor a whit nearer the Infinite.

MEPHISTOPHELES. My good sir, you see things precisely as they are ordinarily seen; we must manage matters better, before the joys of life pass away from us. What the deuce! you have surely hands and feet and head and — And what I enjoy with spirit, is that, then, the less my own? If I can pay for six horses, are not their powers mine? I dash along and am a proper man, as if I had four-and-twenty legs. Quick, then, have done with poring, and straight away into the world with me. I tell you, a fellow that speculates is like a brute driven in a circle on a barren heath by an evil spirit, whilst fair green meadow lies everywhere around.

FAUST. How shall we set about it?

MEPHISTOPHELES. We will just start and take our chance. What a place of martyrdom! what a precious life to lead! — wearying one's self and a set of youngsters to death. Leave that to your neighbor, Mr. Paunch! Why will you plague yourself to thrash straw? The best that you can know, you dare not tell the lads. Even now I hear one in the passage.

FAUST. I cannot possibly see him.

MEPHISTOPHELES. The poor boy has waited long; he must not be sent away disconsolate. Come, give me your cap and gown: the mask will become me to admiration. (*He changes his dress.*) Now trust to my wit. I require but a quarter of an hour. In the meantime prepare for our pleasant trip. (*Exit FAUST.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES, in FAUST'S gown. Only despise reason and knowledge, the highest strength of humanity; only permit thyself to be confirmed in delusion and sorcery-work by the spirit of lies, — and I have thee unconditionally. Fate

has given him a spirit which is ever pressing onwards uncurbed, — whose overstrained striving o'erleaps the joys of earth. Him will I drag through the wild passages of life, through vapid unmeaningness. He shall sprawl, stand amazed, stick fast, — and meat and drink shall hang, for his insatiableness, before his craving lips: he shall pray for refreshment in vain; and had he not already given himself up to the devil, he would, notwithstanding, inevitably be lost. (*A STUDENT enters.*)

STUDENT. I am but just arrived, and come, full of devotion, to address and know a man whom all name to me with reverence.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am flattered by your politeness. You see a man like many others. Have you yet made any inquiry elsewhere?

STUDENT. Interest yourself for me, I pray you. I come with every good disposition, a little money, and youthful spirits; my mother could hardly be brought to part with me, but I would fain learn something worth learning in the world.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You are here at the very place for it.

STUDENT. Honestly speaking, I already wish myself away. These walls, these halls, are by no means to my taste. The space is exceedingly confined; there is not a tree, nothing green, to be seen; and in the lecture-rooms, on the benches, — hearing, sight, and thinking fail me.

MEPHISTOPHELES. It all depends on habit. Thus, at first, the child does not take kindly to the mother's breast, but soon finds a pleasure in nourishing itself. Just so will you daily experience a greater pleasure at the breasts of wisdom.

STUDENT. I shall hang delightedly upon her neck; do but tell me how I am to attain it.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Tell me, before you go further, what faculty you fix upon?

STUDENT. I should wish to be profoundly learned, and should like to comprehend what is upon earth or in heaven, science and nature.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You are here upon the right scent; but you must not suffer your attention to be distracted.

STUDENT. I am heart and soul in the cause. A little relaxation and pastime, to be sure, would not come amiss on bright summer holidays.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Make the most of time, it glides away so fast. But method teaches you to gain time. For this

reason, my good friend, I advise you to begin with a course of logic. In this study, the mind is well broken in, — laced up in Spanish boots, so that it creeps circumspectly along the path of thought, and runs no risk of flickering, ignis fatuus-like, in all directions. Then many a day will be spent in teaching you that one, two, three — is necessary for that which formerly you hit off at a blow, as easily as eating and drinking. It is with the fabric of thought as with a weaver's masterpiece; where one treadle moves a thousand threads: the shuttles shoot backwards and forwards; the threads flow unseen: ties, by thousands, are struck off at a blow. Your philosopher, — he steps in and proves to you, it must have been so: the first would be so, the second so, and therefore the third and fourth so: and if the first and second were not, the third and fourth would never be. The students of all countries put a high value on this, but none have become weavers. He who wishes to know and describe anything living, seeks first to drive the spirit out of it; he has then the parts in his hand; only, unluckily, the spiritual bond is wanting. Chemistry terms it *encheiresis naturæ*, and mocks herself without knowing it. *

STUDENT. I cannot quite comprehend you.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You will soon improve in that respect, if you learn to reduce and classify all things properly.

STUDENT. I am so confounded by all this; I feel as if a mill-wheel was turning round in my head.

MEPHISTOPHELES. In the next place, before everything else, you must set to at metaphysics. There see that you conceive profoundly what is not made for human brains. A fine word will stand you in stead for what enters and what does not enter there. And be sure, for this half-year, to adopt the strictest regularity. You will have five lectures every day. Be in as the clock strikes. Be well prepared beforehand with the paragraphs carefully conned, that you may see the better that he says nothing but what is in the book; yet write away as zealously as if the Holy Ghost were dictating to you.

STUDENT. You need not tell me that a second time. I can imagine how useful it is. For what one has in black and white one can carry home in comfort.

MEPHISTOPHELES. But choose a faculty.

STUDENT. I cannot reconcile myself in jurisprudence.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I cannot much blame you. I know the nature of this science. Laws descend, like an inveterate

hereditary disease; they trail from generation to generation, and glide imperceptibly from place to place. Reason becomes nonsense; beneficence a plague. Woe to thee that thou art a grandson! Of the law that is born with us — of that, unfortunately, there is never a question.

STUDENT. You increase my repugnance. Oh, happy he whom you instruct! I should almost like to study theology.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I do not wish to mislead you. As for this science, it is so difficult to avoid the wrong way; there is so much hidden poison in it, which is hardly to be distinguished from the medicine. Here, again, it is best to attend but one master, and swear by his words. Generally speaking, stick to words; you will then pass through the safe gate into the temple of certainty.

STUDENT. But there must be some meaning connected with the word.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Right! only we must not be too anxious about that; for it is precisely where meaning fails that a word comes in most opportunely. Disputes may be admirably carried on with words; a system may be built with words; words form a capital subject for belief; a word admits not of an iota being taken from it.

STUDENT. Your pardon, I detain you by my many questions, but I must still trouble you. Would you be so kind as to add a pregnant word or two on medicine? Three years is a short time, and the field, God knows, is far too wide. If one has but a hint, one can feel one's way along further.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*). I begin to be tired of the prosing style. I must play the devil properly again (*aloud*). The spirit of medicine is easy to be caught; you study through the great and little world, and let things go on in the end — as it pleases God. It is vain that you wander scientifically about; no man will learn more than he can; he who avails himself of the passing moment — that is the proper man. You are tolerably well built, nor will you be wanting in boldness, and if you do but confide in yourself other souls will confide in you. In particular, learn how to treat the women: their eternal *ohs!* and *ahs!* so thousandfold, are to be cured from a single point, and if you only assume a moderately demure air, you will have them all under your thumb. You must have a title to convince them that your art is superior to most others, and then you are admitted from the first to all those little privileges which another spends years in coax-

ing for.— Learn how to feel the pulse adroitly, and boldly clasp them, with hot wanton looks, around the tapering hip, to see how tightly it is laced.

STUDENT. There is some sense in that; one sees, at any rate, the where and the how.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Gray, my dear friend, is all theory, and green the golden tree of life.

STUDENT. I vow to you all is a dream to me. Might I trouble you another time to hear your wisdom speak upon the grounds?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am at your service, to the extent of my poor abilities.

STUDENT. I cannot possibly go away without placing my album in your hands. Do not grudge me this token of your favor.

MEPHISTOPHELES. With all my heart. (*He writes and gives it back.*)

STUDENT *reads*. Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum. (*He closes the book reverentially, and takes his leave.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES. Only follow the old saying and my cousin the snake, and some time or other you, with your likeness to God, will be sorry enough.

FAUST *enters*. Whither now?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Where you please; to see the little, then the great world. With what joy, what profit, will you revel through the course.

FAUST. But with my long beard, I want the easy manners of society. I shall fail in the attempt. I never knew how to present myself in the world; I feel so little in the presence of others. I shall be in a constant state of embarrassment.

MEPHISTOPHELES. My dear friend, all that will come of its own accord; so soon as you feel confidence in yourself you know the art of life.

FAUST. How, then, are we to start? Where are your carriages, horses, and servants?

MEPHISTOPHELES. We have but to spread out this mantle that shall bear us through the air. Only you will have no heavy baggage on this bold trip. A little inflammable air, which I will get ready, will lift us quickly from this earth; and if we are light, we shall mount rapidly. I wish you joy of your new course of life.

AUERBACH'S CELLAR IN LEIPSIK.

(Drinking bout of merry fellows.)

FROSCH. Will no one drink? No one laugh? I will teach you to grin. Why, you are like wet straw to-day, yet at other times you blaze brightly enough.

BRANDER. That is your fault, you contribute nothing towards it: no nonsense, no beastliness——

FROSCH *(throws a glass of wine over BRANDER's head)*. There are both for you!

BRANDER. You double hog!

FROSCH. Why, you wanted me to be so.

SIEBEL. Out with him who quarrels! With open heart strike up the song! swill and shout! holla, holla, ho!

ALTMAYER. Woe is me, I am a lost man. Cotton, here! the knave splits my ears.

SIEBEL. It is only when the vault echoes again that one feels the true power of the bass.

FROSCH. Right: out with him who takes anything amiss. A! taralara, da!

ALTMAYER. A! taralara!

FROSCH. Our throats are tuned. *(He sings.)* The dear holy Romish empire, how holds it still together?

BRANDER. A nasty song! psha, a political song! an offensive song! Thank God every morning of your life that you have not the Roman empire to care for. I, at least, esteem it no slight gain that I am not emperor nor chancellor. But we cannot do without a head. We will choose a pope. You know what sort of qualification turns the scale and elevates the man.

FROSCH *sings*. Soar up, Madam Nightingale, give my sweetheart ten thousand greetings for me.

SIEBEL. No greeting to the sweetheart; I will not hear of it.

FROSCH. Greeting to the sweetheart, and a kiss, too! Thou shalt not hinder me.

(He sings.)

Open bolts! in stilly night.

Open bolts! the lover wakes.

Shut bolts! at morning's dawn.

SIEBEL. Ay, sing, sing on, and praise and celebrate her; my turn for laughing will come, She has taken me in; she will do the same for you. May she have a hobgoblin for a

lover! He may toy with her on a cross way. An old he-goat, on his return from the Blocksberg, may wicker good night to her on the gallop. A hearty fellow of genuine flesh and blood is far too good for the wench. I will hear of no greeting, unless it be to smash her windows.

BRANDER (*striking on the table*). Attend, attend; listen to me! You gentlemen must allow me to know something of life. Lovesick folks sit here, and I must give them something suitable to their condition by way of good night. Attend! a song of the newest cut! and strike boldly in with the chorus.

(*He sings.*)

There was a rat in the cellar, who lived on nothing but fat and butter, and had raised himself up a paunch fit for Doctor Luther himself. The cook had laid poison for him, then the world became too hot for him, as if he had love in his body.

CHORUS. — As if he had love in his body.

He ran round, he ran out, he drank of every puddle; he gnawed and scratched the whole house, but his fury availed nothing; he gave many a bound of agony; the poor beast was soon done for, as if he had love in his body,

CHORUS. — As if, etc.

He came running into the kitchen, for sheer pain, in open daylight, fell on the earth, and lay convulsed, and panted pitiably. Then the poisoner exclaimed, with a laugh — Ha! he is at his last gasp, as if he had love in his body.

CHORUS. — As if, etc.

SIEBEL. How the flats chuckle! It is a fine thing, to be sure, to lay poison for the poor rats.

BRANDER. They stand high in your favor, I dare say.

ALTMAYER. The bald-pated paunch! The misadventure makes him humble and mild. He sees in the swollen rat his own image drawn to the life.

FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Before all things else, I must bring you into merry company, that you may see how lightly life may be passed. These people make every day a feast. With little wit and much self-complacency, each turns round in the narrow circle-dance, like kittens playing with their tails. So long as they have no headache to complain of, and so long as they can get credit from their host, they are merry and free from care.

BRANDER. They are just off their journey; one may see as much from their strange manner. They have not been here an hour.

FROSCH. Thou art right; Leipsic is the place for me: it is a little Paris, and gives its folks a finish.

SIEBEL. What do you take the strangers to be?

FROSCH. Let me alone; in the drinking of a bumper I will worm it out of them as easily as draw a child's tooth. They appear to me to be noble; they have a proud and discontented look.

BRANDER. Mountebanks to a certainty, I wager.

ALTMAYER. Likely enough.

FROSCH. Now mark; I will smoke them.

MEPHISTOPHELES to FAUST. These people would never scent the devil if he had them by the throat.

FAUST. Good morrow, gentlemen.

SIEBEL. Thanks, and good morrow to you. (*Aside, looking at MEPHISTOPHELES askance.*) Why does the fellow halt on one foot?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Will you permit us to sit down with you? We shall have company to cheer us, instead of good liquor, which is not to be had.

ALTMAYER. You seem a very dainty gentleman.

FROSCH. I dare say you are lately from Rippach. Did you sup with Mr. Hans before you left?

MEPHISTOPHELES. We passed him without stopping to-day. The last time we spoke to him, he had much to say of his cousins; he charged us with compliments to each. (*With an inclination towards FROSCH.*)

ALTMAYER (*aside*). Thou hast it there! he knows a thing or two.

SIEBEL. A knowing fellow.

FROSCH. Only wait, I shall have him presently.

MEPHISTOPHELES. If I am not mistaken, we heard some practised voices singing in chorus? No doubt singing must echo admirably from this vaulted roof.

FROSCH. I dare say you are a dilettante.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Oh, no! The power is weak, but the desire is strong.

ALTMAYER. Give us a song.

MEPHISTOPHELES. As many as you like.

SIEBEL. Only let it be bran new.

MEPHISTOPHELES. We are just returned from Spain, the fair land of wine and song. (*He sings.*) There was once upon a time a king who had a great flea —

FROSCH. Hark! A flea! Did you catch that? A flea is a fine sort of chap.

MEPHISTOPHELES *sings*. There was once upon a time a king; he had a great flea, and was as fond of it as if it had been his own son. Then he called his tailor; the tailor came. "There, measure the youngster for clothes, and measure him for breeches."

BRANDER. Only don't forget to impress it on the tailor to measure with the greatest nicety, and, as he loves his head, to make the breeches sit smoothly.

MEPHISTOPHELES *sings*. He was now attired in velvet and silk, had ribbons on his coat, had a cross besides, and was forthwith made minister, and had a great star. Then his brothers and sisters also became great folks. And the ladies and gentlemen at court were dreadfully tormented; from the queen to the waiting-women they were pricked and bitten, yet dared not crack nor scratch them away. But we crack and stifle fast enough when one pricks. CHORUS. — But we crack, etc.

FROSCH. Bravo! bravo! That was capital.

SIEBEL. So perish every flea.

BRANDER. Point your fingers, and nick them cleverly.

ALTMAYER. Liberty forever! Wine forever!

MEPHISTOPHELES. I would willingly drink a glass in honor of liberty, were your wine a thought better.

SIEBEL. You had better not let us hear that again!

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am afraid of giving offence to the landlord, or I would treat these worthy gentlemen out of our own stock.

SIEBEL. O, bring it in; I take the blame upon myself.

FROSCH. Give us a good glass, and we shall not be sparing of our praise; only don't let your samples be too small; for, if I am to give an opinion, I require a regular mouthful.

ALTMAYER (*aside*). They are from the Rhine, I guess.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Bring a gimlet.

BRANDER. What for? You surely have not the casks at the door?

ALTMAYER. Behind there, is a tool-chest of the landlord's.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*taking the gimlet*) to FROSCH. Now say, what wine do you wish to taste?

FROSCH. What do you mean? Have you so many sorts?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I give every man his choice.

ALTMAYER to FROSCH. Ah! you begin to lick your lips already.

FROSCH. Well! if I am to choose, I will take Rhine wine. Our fatherland affords the best of gifts.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*boring a hole in the edge of the table where FROSCH is sitting*). Get a little wax to make stoppers, immediately.

ALTMAYER. Ah! these are juggler's tricks.

MEPHISTOPHELES to BRANDER. And you?

BRANDER. I choose champagne, and right sparkling it must be. (MEPHISTOPHELES bores again; one of the others has in the meantime prepared the wax-stoppers and stopped the holes.) One cannot always avoid what is foreign; what is good often lies so far off. A true German cannot abide Frenchmen, but has no objection to their wine.

SIEBEL (*as MEPHISTOPHELES approaches him*). I must own I do not like acid wine; give me a glass of genuine sweet.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*bores*). You shall have Tokay in a twinkling.

ALTMAYER. No, gentlemen, look me in the face. I see plainly you are only making fun of us.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Ha! ha! that would be taking too great a liberty with such distinguished guests. Quick! only speak out at once. What wine can I have the pleasure of serving you with?

ALTMAYER. With any; there is no need of much questioning. (*After all the holes are bored and stopped*)

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with strange gestures*).

The vine bears grapes.

The he-goat bears horns.

Wine is juicy,

Vines are wood;

The wooden table can also give wine.

A deep insight into nature:

Behold a miracle, only have faith;

Now draw the stoppers, and drink.

ALL (*as they draw the stoppers, and the wine he chose runs into each man's glass*). Oh, beautiful spring that flows for us!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Only take care not to spill any of it. (*They drink repeatedly.*)

ALL sing. We are as happy as cannibals — as five hundred swine.

MEPHISTOPHELES. These people are now in their glory; mark, how merry they are.

FAUST. I should like to be off now,

MEPHISTOPHELES. But first attend; their brutishness will display itself right gloriously.

SIEBEL. (*Drinks carelessly; the wine is spilt upon the ground, and turns to flame.*) Help! fire, help! Hell is burning.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*conjuring the flame*). Be quiet, friendly element! (*To SIEBEL.*) This time it was only a drop of the fire of purgatory.

SIEBEL. What may that be? Hold! you shall pay dearly for it. It seems that you do not know us.

FROSCH. He had better not try that a second time.

ALTMAYER. I think we had better send him packing quietly.

SIEBEL. What, sir, you dare play off your hocus-pocus here?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Silence, old wine-butt!

SIEBEL. Broomstick! will you be rude to us, too?

BRANDER. But hold! or blows shall rain.

ALTMAYER. (*Draws a stopper from the table; fire flies out against him.*) I burn! I burn!

SIEBEL. Sorcery! thrust home! the knave is fair game. (*They draw their knives and attack MEPHISTOPHELES.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with solemn gestures*).

False form and word,
Change sense and place,
Be here, be there!

(*They stand amazed, and gaze on each other.*)

ALTMAYER. Where am I? What a beautiful country!

FROSCH. Vineyards! Can I believe my eyes?

SIEBEL. And grapes close at hand!

BRANDER. Here, under these green leaves, see, what a stem! see what a bunch! (*He seizes SIEBEL by the nose. The others do the same one with the other, and brandish their knives.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES (*as before*). Error, loose the bandage from their eyes! And do ye remember the devil's mode of jesting. (*He disappears with FAUST. The fellows start back from one another.*)

SIEBEL. What's the matter?

ALTMAYER. How?

FROSCH. Was that your nose?

BRANDER to SIEBEL. And I have yours in my hand!

ALTMAYER. It was a shock that thrilled through every limb! Give me a chair; I am sinking.

FROSCH. No, do but tell me what has happened?

SIEBEL. Where is the fellow? If I meet with him, it shall be as much as his life is worth.

ALTMAYER. I saw him with my own eyes riding out of the cellar door upon a cask. My feet feel as heavy as lead. (*Turning towards the table.*) My! I wonder whether the wine is flowing still?

SIEBEL. It was all a cheat, a lie, a make-believe. Yet it seemed to me as if I was drinking wine.

BRANDER. But how was it with the grapes?

ALTMAYER. Let any one tell me, after that, that one is not to believe in wonders!

WITCHES' KITCHEN.

A large caldron is hanging over the fire on a low hearth. Different figures are seen in the fumes which rise from it. A female monkey is sitting by the caldron and skimming it, and taking care that it does not run over. The male monkey is seated near with the young ones, and warming himself. The walls and ceiling are hung with the strangest articles of witch furniture.

FAUST. I loathe this mad concern of witchcraft. Do you promise me that I shall recover in this chaos of insanity? Do I need an old hag's advice? And will this mess of cookery really take thirty years from my body? Woe is me, if you know of nothing better! Hope is already gone. Has nature and has a noble spirit discovered no sort of balsam?

MEPHISTOPHELES. My friend, now again you speak wisely! There is also a natural mode of renewing youth. But it is in another book, and is a strange chapter.

FAUST. Let me know it.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Well, to have a mean without money, physician, or sorcery; betake thyself straightway to the field, begin to back and dig, confine thyself and thy sense within a narrow circle; support thyself on simple food; live with beasts as a beast, and think it no robbery to manure the land you crop. That is the best way, believe me, to keep a man young to eighty.

FAUST. I am not used to it. I cannot bring myself to take the spade in hand. The confined life does not suit me at all.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Then you must have recourse to the witch, after all.

FAUST. But why the old woman in particular? Cannot you brew the drink yourself?

MEPHISTOPHELES. That were a pretty pastime! I could build a thousand bridges in the time. Not art and science only, but patience is required for the job. A quiet spirit is busy at it for years; time only makes this fine liquor strong. And the ingredients are exceedingly curious. The devil, it is true, has taught it to her, but the devil cannot make it. (*Perceiving the MONKEYS.*) See what a pretty breed! That is the lass—that the lad. (*To the MONKEYS.*)—It seems your mistress is not at home?

THE MONKEYS.

At the feast,
Out of the house,
Out and away by the chimney-stone!

MEPHISTOPHELES. How long does she usually rake!

THE MONKEYS. Whilst we are warming our paws.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to FAUST*). What think you of the pretty creatures?

FAUST. The most disgusting I ever saw.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Nay, a discourse like the present is precisely what I am fondest of engaging in. (*To the MONKEYS.*) Tell me, accursed whelps, what are ye stirring up with the porridge?

MONKEYS. We are cooking coarse beggars' broth.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You will have plenty of customers.

THE HE-MONKEY. (*Approaches and fawns on MEPHISTOPHELES.*)

Oh, quick, throw the dice,
And make me rich—
And let me win!
My fate is a sorry one,
And had I money
I should not want for consideration.

MEPHISTOPHELES. How happy the monkey would think himself, if he could only put into the lottery.

(*The YOUNG MONKEYS have in the meantime, begun playing with a large globe, and roll it forwards.*)

THE HE-MONKEY.

That is the world;
 It rises and falls,
 And rolls unceasingly.
 It rings like glass:
 How soon breaks that?
 It is hollow within;
 It glitters much here,
 And still more here —
 I am alive!
 My dear son,
 Keep thee aloof;
 Thou must die!
 It is of clay,
 This makes potsherds.

MEPHISTOPHELES. What is the sieve for?

THE HE-MONKEY (*takes it down*). Wert thou a thief, I should know thee at once. (*He runs to the female and makes her look through.*)

Look through the sieve!
 Dost thou recognize the thief?
 And dardest not name him?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*approaching the fire*). And this pot?

THE MONKEYS.

The half-witted sot!
 He knows not the pot!
 He knows not the kettle!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Uncivil brute!

THE HE-MONKEY. Take the brush here and sit down on the settle. (*He makes MEPHISTOPHELES sit down.*)

FAUST (*who all this time has been standing before a looking-glass, now approaching and now standing off from it*). What do I see? What heavenly image shows itself in this magic mirror! O love! lend me the swiftest of thy wings, and bear me to her region. Ah! when I stir from this spot, when I venture to go near, I can only see her as in a mist. The loveliest image of a woman! Is it possible — is woman so lovely? Must I see in these recumbent limbs the innermost essence of all heavens? Is there anything like it upon earth?

MEPHISTOPHELES. When a God first works hard for six days, and himself says bravo at the end, it is but natural that something clever should come of it. For this time look your fill. I know where to find out such a love for you, and happy he whose fortune it is to bear her home as a bride-

groom. (FAUST continues looking into the mirror. MEPHISTOPHELES, stretching himself on the settle, and playing with the brush, continues speaking.) Here I sit, like the king upon his throne; here is my sceptre — I only want the crown.

THE MONKEYS (*who have hitherto been playing all sorts of strange antics, bring MEPHISTOPHELES a crown, with loud acclamations*). O be so good as to glue the crown with sweat and blood. (*They handle the crown awkwardly, and break it into two pieces, with which they jump about.*)

Now it is done.
We speak and see;
We hear and rhyme —

FAUST (*before the mirror*). Woe is me! I am becoming almost mad!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*pointing to the MONKEYS*). My own head begins to totter now.

THE MONKEYS.

— And if we are lucky —
And if things fit,
Then there are thoughts.

FAUST (*as before*). My heart is beginning to burn. Do but let us be gone immediately.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*in the same position*). Well, no one can deny, at any rate, that they are sincere poets. (*The caldron, which the SHE-MONKEY has neglected, begins to boil over; a great flame arises, and streams up the chimney. The WITCH comes shooting down through the flame with horrible cries.*)

THE WITCH.

Ough, ough, ough, ough!
Damned beast! accursed sow!
Neglecting the caldron, scorching your dame —
Cursed beast!

Espying FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES.)

What now?
Who are ye?
What would ye here?
Who hath come slinking in?
The red plague of fire
Into your bones!

(*She dips the skimming ladle into the caldron, and sprinkles flames at FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, and the MONKEYS. The MONKEYS whimper.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who inverts the brush which he holds in his hand, and strikes amongst the glasses and pots*).

To pieces!
To pieces!
There lies the porridge!
There lies the glass!

It is only carrying on the jest — beating time, thou carrion, to thy melody. (*As the WITCH steps back in rage and amazement.*) Dost thou recognize me, thou atomy, thou scare-crow? Dost thou recognize thy lord and master? What is there to hinder me from striking in good earnest, from dashing thee and thy monkey-spirits to pieces? Hast thou no more any respect for the red doublet? Canst thou not distinguish the cock's feather? Have I concealed this face? Must I then name myself?

THE WITCH. O master, pardon this rough reception. But I see no cloven foot. Where, then, are your two ravens?

MEPHISTOPHELES. This once the apology may serve. For, to be sure, it is long since last we met. The march of intellect, too, which licks all the world into shape has even reached the devil. The northern phantom is no more to be seen. Where do you now see horns, tail and claws? And as for the foot, which I cannot do without, it would prejudice me in society; therefore, like many a gallant, I have worn false calves these many years.

THE WITCH (*dancing*). I am almost beside myself to see the gallant Satan here again.

MEPHISTOPHELES. The name, woman, I beg to be spared.

THE WITCH. Wherefore? What has it done to you?

MEPHISTOPHELES. It has long been written in story-books; but men are not the better for that; they are rid of the wicked one, the wicked have remained. You may call me Baron, that will do very well. I am a cavalier, like other cavaliers. You doubt not of my gentle blood; see here, these are the arms I bear! (*He makes an unseemly gesture.*)

THE WITCH *laughs immoderately*. Ha, ha! That is in your way. You are the same mad wag as ever.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to FAUST*). My friend, attend to this. This is the way to deal with witches.

THE WITCH. Now, sirs, say what you are for.

MEPHISTOPHELES. A good glass of the juice you wot of. I must beg you to let it be of the oldest. Years double its power.

D
off
(He
THE V.

And
And th
Then art th
Lose the four!
Out of five and six,
So says the Witch,
Make seven and eight,
Then it is done,
And nine is one,
And ten is none.
That is the witches' one-times-

FAUST. It seems to me that the hag is raving.

MEPHISTOPHELES. There is a good deal more to it than that. I know it well; the whole book is to the same tune. I have wasted many an hour upon it, for a downright conundrum it remains equally mysterious to wise folks and fools. To my friend, the art is old and new. It has ever been the art to spread error instead of truth by three and one, and one and three. It is taught and prattled uninterruptedly. Will you concern themselves about dolts? Men are wont to

and
del-
ITCH

must not

ight do you.

And if I can do any-
only mention it to me on

long! if you sing it occasionally,
effect on you.

TO FAUST). Come quick, and be guided
necessarily expire, to make the spirit
and bone. I will afterwards teach you
ility of idleness, and you will feel ere long,
delight, how Cupid bestirs himself and bounds
ther.

Let me only look another moment in the glass.
The form was too, too lovely.

ETOPHELES. Nay, nay ; you shall soon see the model
mankind in flesh and blood. (*Aside.*) With this
in your body, you will soon see a Helen in every
you meet.

THE STREET.

FAUST. (MARGARET *passing by*.) My pretty lady, may I take the liberty of offering you my arm and escort?

MARGARET. I am neither lady, nor pretty, and can go home without an escort. (*She disengages herself and exit.*)

FAUST. By heaven this girl *is* lovely! I have never seen the like of her. She is so well-behaved and virtuous, and something snappish, withal. The redness of her lip, the light of her cheek — I shall never forget them all the days of my life. The manner in which she cast down her eyes is deeply stamped upon my heart: and how tart she was — it was absolutely ravishing!

MEPHISTOPHELES *enters*.

FAUST. Hark, you must get me the girl.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Which?

FAUST. She passed but now.

MEPHISTOPHELES. What, she? She came from her confessor, who absolved her from all her sins. I stole up close to the chair. It is an innocent little thing, that went for next to nothing to the confessional. Over her I have no power.

FAUST. Yet she is past fourteen!

MEPHISTOPHELES. You positively speak like Jack Rake, who covets every sweet flower for himself, and fancies that there is neither honor nor favor which is not to be had for the plucking. But this will not always do.

FAUST. My good Mr. Sermonizer, don't plague me with your morality. And, in a word, I tell you this: if the sweet young creature does not lie this very night in my arms at midnight our compact is at an end.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Consider what is possible. I need a fortnight, at least, to find an opportunity.

FAUST. Had I but seven hours clear, I should not want the devil's assistance to seduce such a child.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You talk now almost like a Frenchman: but don't fret about it, I beg. What boots it to go straight to enjoyment? The delight is not so great by far, as when you have kneaded and molded the doll on all sides with all sorts of nonsense, as many a French story teaches.

FAUST. But I have appetite without all that.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Now seriously, and without offence, I tell you, once for all, that the lovely girl is not to be had in

such a hurry ; nothing here is to be taken by storm ; we must have recourse to stratagem.

FAUST. Get me something belonging to the angel. Carry me to her place of repose ; get me a kerchief from her bosom, a garter of my love.

MEPHISTOPHELES. That you may see my anxiety to minister to your passion, — we will not lose a moment ; this very day I will conduct you to her chamber.

FAUST. And shall I see her ? have her ? —

MEPHISTOPHELES. No. She will be at a neighbor's. In the meantime, you, all alone, and in her atmosphere, may feast to satiety on anticipated joy.

FAUST. Can we go now ?

MEPHISTOPHELES. It is too early.

FAUST. Get me a present for her. [Exit.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Presents directly ! Now that's capital ! That's the way to succeed ! I know many a fine place, and many a long-buried treasure. I must look them over a bit. [Exit.

EVENING.

A neat little Room.

MARGARET (*braiding and binding up her hair.*) I would give something to know who that gentleman was to-day ! He had a gallant bearing, and is of a noble family, I am sure. I could read that on his brow ; he would not else have been so impudent. [Exit.

MEPHISTOPHELES — FAUST.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Come in — as softly as possible — only come in !

FAUST (*after a pause*). Leave me alone, I beg of you.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*looking round*). It is not every maiden that is so neat. [Exit.

FAUST (*looking round*). Welcome, sweet twilight, that pervades this sanctuary ! Possess my heart, delicious pangs of love, you who live languishing on the dew of hope ! What a feeling of peace, order, and contentment breathes round ! What abundance in this poverty ! What bliss in this cell ! (*He throws himself upon the leathern easy-chair by the side of the bed.*) Oh ! receive me, thou, who hast welcomed with open

arms, in joy and sorrow, the generations that are past. Ah, how often has a swarm of children clustered about this patriarchal throne. Here, perhaps, in gratitude for her Christmas-box, with the warm round cheek of childhood — has my beloved piously kissed the withered hand of her grandsire. Maiden, I feel thy spirit of abundance and order flutter around me — that spirit which daily instructs thee like a mother — which bids thee spread the neat cloth upon the table and curl the sand upon the floor. Dear hand! so god-like; you make the hut a heaven; and here — (*He lifts up a bed-curtain*), what blissful tremor seizes me! Here could I linger for hours! Nature, here, in light dreams, you matured the born angel. Here lay the child! its gentle bosom filled with warm life; and here, with weavings of hallowed purity, the divine image developed itself. And thou, what has brought thee hither? How deeply moved I feel! What wouldst thou here? Why grows thy heart so heavy? Poor Faust, I no longer know thee. Am I breathing an enchanted atmosphere? I panted so for instant enjoyment, and feel myself dissolving into a dream of love. Are we the sport of every pressure of the air? And if she entered this very moment, how wouldst thou atone for thy guilt! The big boaster, alas, how shrunk! would lie, dissolved away, at her feet.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Quick! I see her coming below.

FAUST. Away, away! I return no more.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Here is a casket tolerably heavy. I took it from somewhere else. Place it instantly in the press. I promise you she will be fairly beside herself. I put baubles in it to gain another; but children are children, and play is play, all the world over.

FAUST. I know not — shall I?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Is that a thing to ask about? Perchance you mean to keep the treasure for yourself, in that case, I advise, you to spare the precious hours for your lusts, and further trouble to me. I hope you are not avaricious. I scratch my head, rub my hands — (*He places the casket in the press and closes the lock.*) But quick, away to bend the sweet young creature to your heart's desire; and now you look as if you were going to the lecture-room — as if Physic and Metaphysic were standing gray and bodily before you there. But away! [*Exeunt.*]

MARGARET (*with a lamp.*) It feels so close, so sultry here. (*She opens the window.*) And yet it is not so very warm with-

out. I begin to feel I know not how. I wish my mother would come home. I tremble all over; but I am a silly, timid woman. (*She begins to sing as she undresses herself.*)

SONG. There was a king in Thule, faithful even to the grave, to whom his dying mistress gave a golden goblet.

He prized nothing above it; he emptied it at every feast; his eyes overflowed as often as he drank out of it.

And when he came to die, he reckoned up the cities in his kingdom; he grudged none of them to his heir, but not so with the goblet.

He sat at the royal banquet, with his knights around him, in his proud ancestral hall, there in his castle on the sea.

There stood the old toper, took a parting draught of life's glow, and threw the hallowed goblet down into the waves.

He saw it splash, fill, and sink deep into the sea; his eyes fell, he never drank a drop more. (*She opens the press to put away her clothes, and perceives the casket.*) How came this beautiful casket here? I am sure I locked the press. It is very strange! What is in it I wonder? Perhaps some one brought it as a pledge, and my mother lent money upon it. A little key hangs by the ribbon: I have a good mind to open it. What is here? Good heavens! look! I have never seen anything like it in all my born days! A set of trinkets a countess might wear on the highest festival. How would the chain become me? To whom can such finery belong? (*She puts them on and walks before the looking-glass.*) If the earrings were but mine! one cuts quite a different figure in them. What avails your beauty, poor maiden? That may be all very pretty and good, but they let it all be. You are praised, half in pity; but after gold presses — on gold hangs — everything, — Alas, for us poor ones!

PROMENADE.

FAUST, *walking up and down thoughtfully.* To him MEPHISTOPHELES. By all despised love! By the elements of hell! Would that I knew something worse to curse by!

FAUST. What is the matter? What is it that pinches you so sharply? I never saw such a face in my life!

MEPHISTOPHELES. I could give myself to the devil directly were I not the devil myself.

FAUST. Is your brain disordered? It becomes you truly to rave like a madman.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Only think! A priest has carried off the jewels provided for Margaret. The mother gets sight of the thing, and begins at once to have a secret horror of it. Truly the woman hath a fine nose, is ever snuffling in her prayer-book, and smells in every piece of furniture, whether the thing be holy or profane; and she plainly smells out in the jewels that there was not much blessing connected with them. "My child," said she, "ill-gotten wealth ensnares the soul, consumes the blood. We will consecrate it to the Mother of God; she will gladden us with heavenly manna." Margaret made a wry face; it is, after all, thought she, a gift-horse; and truly, he cannot be godless, who brought it here so handsomely. The mother sent for a priest. — Scarcely had he heard the jest, but he seemed well pleased with the sight. He spoke, "This shows a good disposition; who conquers himself, — he is the gainer. The church has a good stomach; she has eaten up whole countries, and has never yet overeaten herself. The church alone, my good woman, can digest unrighteous wealth."

FAUST. That is a general custom; a Jew and a king can do it, too.

MEPHISTOPHELES. So saying, he swept off clasp, chain, and ring, as if they were so many mushrooms; thanked them neither more nor less than if it had been a basket of nuts; promised them all heavenly reward — and very much edified they were.

FAUST. And Margaret —

MEPHISTOPHELES. Is now sitting full of restlessness, not knowing what to do with herself; thinks day and night on the trinkets, and still more on him who gave them to her.

FAUST. My love's grief distresses me. Get her another set immediately. The first were no great things after all.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Oh! to be sure, all is child's play to the gentleman!

FAUST. Do it, and order it as I wish. Stick close to her neighbor. Don't be a milk-and-water devil; and fetch a fresh set of jewels.

MEPHISTOPHELES. With all my heart, honored sir. (FAUST *exit*.) A love-sick fool like this puffs away sun, moon, and all the stars indifferently, by way of pastime for his mistress.

THE NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE.

MARTHA (*alone*). God forgive my dear husband; he has not acted well towards me. He goes straight away into the world, and leaves me widowed and lonely. Yet truly I never did anything to vex him; God knows I loved him to my heart. (*She weeps.*) Perhaps he is actually dead. Oh, torture! Had I but a certificate of his death!

MARGARET (*enters*). Martha!

MARTHA. What is the matter, Margaret?

MARGARET. My knees almost sink under me! I have found just such another ebony casket in my press—and things absolutely magnificent, far costlier than the first.

MARTHA. You must say nothing about it to your mother. She would carry it to the confessional again.

MARGARET. Now, only see! only look at them!

MARTHA (*dresses her up in them*). Oh! you happy creature.

MARGARET. Unfortunately, I must not be seen in them in the street, nor in the church.

MARTHA. Do but come over frequently to me, and put on the trinkets here in private. Walk a little hour up and down before the looking-glass; we shall have our enjoyment in that. And then an occasion offers, a festival occurs, where, little by little, one lets folks see them;—first a chain, then the pearl earrings. Your mother, perhaps, will not observe it, or one may make some pretence to her.

MARGARET. But who could have brought the two caskets? There is something not right about it. (*Some one knocks.*) Good God! can that be my mother?

MARTHA (*looking through the blinds*). It is a stranger—come in.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*enters*). I have made free to come in at once; I have to beg pardon of the ladies. (*He steps back respectfully before Margaret.*) I came to inquire after Mrs. Martha Schwerdtlein.

MARTHA. I am she; what is your pleasure, sir?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside to her*). I know you now—that is enough. You have a visitor of distinction there. Excuse the liberty I have taken. I will call again in the afternoon.

MARTHA (*aloud*). Only think, child—of all things in the world! this gentleman takes you for a lady.

MARGARET. I am a poor young creature. Oh! heavens, the gentleman is too obliging. The jewels and ornaments are none of mine.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Ah! it is not the jewels alone. She has a mien, a look, so striking. How glad I am that I may stay.

MARTHA. What do you bring, then? I am very curious—

MEPHISTOPHELES. I wish I had better news. I hope you will not make me suffer for it. Your husband is dead, and sends you his compliments.

MARTHA. Is dead! the good soul! Oh, woe is me! My husband is dead! Ah, I shall die!

MARGARET. Dear, good Martha, don't despair.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Listen to the melancholy tale.

MARGARET. For this reason I should wish never to be in love for all the days of my life. The loss would grieve me to death.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Joy must have sorrow — sorrow joy.

MARTHA. Relate to me the close of his life.

MEPHISTOPHELES. He lies buried in Padua, at St. Antony's, in a spot well consecrated for a bed of rest,—eternally cool.

MARTHA. Have you nothing else for me?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Yes, a request, big and heavy! be sure to have three hundred masses sung for him. For the rest, my pockets are empty.

MARTHA. What! not a coin by way of token? Not a trinket? what every journeyman mechanic husbands at the bottom of his pouch, saved as a keepsake, and rather starves, rather begs—

MEPHISTOPHELES. Madam, I am very sorry. But he really has not squandered away his money. He, too, bitterly repented of his sins; aye, and bewailed his ill-luck still more.

MARGARET. Ah! that mortals should be so unlucky. Assuredly I will sing many a *requiem* for him.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You deserve to be married directly. You are an amiable girl.

MARGARET. Oh, no, there is time enough for that.

MEPHISTOPHELES. If not a husband, then a gallant in the meantime. It were one of the best gifts of heaven to have so sweet a thing in one's arms.

MARGARET. That is not the custom in this country.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Custom or not, such things do come to pass, though.

MARTHA. But relate to me—

MEPHISTOPHELES. I stood by his death-bed. It was

somewhat better than dung, — of half-rotten straw ; but he died like a Christian, and found that he had still much more upon his score. “How thoroughly,” he cried, “must I detest myself — to run away from my business and my wife in such a manner. Oh ! the recollection is death to me. If she could but forgive me in this life !”

MARTHA (*weeping*). The good man ! I have long since forgiven him.

MEPHISTOPHELES. “But, God knows, she was more in fault than I.”

MARTHA. He lied, then ! What, tell lies on the brink of the grave !

MEPHISTOPHELES. He certainly fabled with his last breath, if I am but half a connoisseur. “I,” said he, “had no occasion to gape for pastime — first to get children, and then bread for them, and bread in the widest sense, — and could not even eat my share in peace.”

MARTHA. Did he thus forget all my faith, all my love — my drudgery by day and night ?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Not so ; he affectionately reflected on it. He said : “When I left Malta, I prayed fervently for my wife and children ; and heaven was so far favorable that our ship took a Turkish vessel, which carried a treasure of the great Sultan. Bravery had its reward, and, as was no more than right, I got my fair share of it.”

MARTHA. How ! where ! Can he have buried it ?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Who knows where it is now scattered to the four winds of heaven ? A fair damsel took an interest in him as he was strolling about, a stranger, in Naples. She manifested great fondness and fidelity towards him ; so much so that he felt it even unto his blessed end.

MARTHA. The villain ! the robber of his children ! And all the wretchedness, all the poverty, could not check his scandalous life.

MEPHISTOPHELES. But consider, he has paid for it with his life. Now, were I in your place, I would mourn him for one chaste year, and have an eye towards a new sweetheart in the meantime.

MARTHA. Oh, God ! but I shall not easily in this world find another like my first. There could hardly be a kinder-hearted fool ; he only loved being away from home too much, and stranger women, and stranger wine, and the cursed dicing.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Well, well, things might have gone on very well if he, on his part, only winked at an equal number of peccadillos in you. I protest, upon this condition, I would change rings with you myself!

MARTHA. Oh, the gentleman is pleased to jest.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*). Now it is full time to be off. I dare say she would take the devil himself at his word. (*To MARGARET.*) How feels your heart?

MARGARET. What do you mean?

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*). Good, innocent child. (*Aloud.*) Farewell, ladies!

MARGARET. Farewell!

MARTHA. Oh, but tell me quickly! I should like to have a certificate where, how, and when my love died and was buried. I was always a friend to regularity, and should like to read his death in the weekly papers.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Ay, my good madam, the truth is manifested by the testimony of two witnesses all the world over; and I have a gallant companion whom I will bring before the judge for you. I will fetch him here.

MARTHA. Oh, pray do!

MEPHISTOPHELES. And the young lady will be here, too? — a fine lad! has travelled much, and shows all possible politeness to the ladies.

MARGARET. I should be covered with confusion in the presence of the gentleman.

MEPHISTOPHELES. In the presence of no king on earth.

MARTHA. Behind the house there, in my garden, we shall expect you both this evening.

THE STREET.

FAUST — MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST. How have you managed? Is it in train? Will it soon do?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Bravo! Do I find you all on fire? Margaret will very shortly be yours. This evening you will see her at her neighbor Martha's. That is a woman especially chosen, as it were, for the procuress and gypsy calling.

FAUST. So far so good.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Something, however, is required of us.

FAUST. One good turn deserves another.

MEPHISTOPHELES. We have only to make a formal deposition that the extended limbs of her lord repose in holy ground in Padua.

FAUST. Wisely done! We shall first be obliged to take the journey thither, I suppose.

MEPHISTOPHELES. *Sancta simplicitas!* There is no necessity for that. Only bear witness without knowing much about the matter.

FAUST. If you have nothing better to propose, the scheme is at an end.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Oh, holy man! There's for you now! Is it the first time in your life that you have borne false testimony? Have you not confidently given definitions of God, of the world, and of whatever moves in it — of man, and of the working of his head and heart — with unabashed front, dauntless breast? And, looking fairly at the real nature of things, did you — you must confess you did not — did you know as much of these matters as of Mr. Schwerdtlein's death?

FAUST. Thou art and ever wilt be a liar, a sophist.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Ay, if one did not look a little deeper. To-morrow, too, will you not, in all honor, make a fool of poor Margaret, and swear to love her with all your soul?

FAUST. And truly from my heart.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Fine talking! Then will you speak of eternal truth and love — of one exclusive, all-absorbing passion; will that also come from the heart?

FAUST. Peace — it will! — when I feel, and seek a name for the passion, the frenzy, but find none; then range with all my senses through the world, grasp at all the most sublime expressions, and call this flame, which is consuming me, endless, eternal, eternal! — is that a devilish play of lies?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am right, for all that.

FAUST. Hark! mark this, I beg of you, and spare my lungs. He who is determined to be right, and has but a tongue, will be right undoubtedly. But, come, I am tired of gossiping. For you are right, particularly because I cannot help myself.

GARDEN.

MARGARET *on* FAUST'S arm, MARTHA *with* MEPHISTOPHELES, *walking up and down.*

MARGARET. I am sure that you are only trifling with me — letting yourself down to shame me. Travellers are wont to put up with things out of complacency. I know too well that my poor prattle cannot entertain a man of your experience.

FAUST. A glance, a word from thee, gives greater pleasure than all the wisdom of this world. (*He kisses her hand.*)

MARGARET. Don't inconvenience yourself! How can you kiss it? It is so coarse, so hard. I have been obliged to do — heaven knows what not; my mother is indeed too close. (*They pass on.*)

MARTHA. And you, sir, are always travelling in this manner?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Alas, that business and duty should force us to it! How many a place one quits with regret, and yet may not tarry in it!

MARTHA. It does very well, in the wild years of youth, to rove about freely through the world. But the evil day comes at last, and to sneak a solitary old bachelor to the grave — that was never well for any one yet.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I shudder at the distant view of it.

MARTHA. Then, worthy sir, think better of it in time. (*They pass on.*)

MARGARET. Ay! out of sight out of mind! Politeness sits easily on you. But you have friends in abundance: they are more sensible than I am.

FAUST. O, thou excellent creature! believe me, what is called sensible often better deserves the name of vanity and narrow-mindedness.

MARGARET. How?

FAUST. Alas, that simplicity, that innocence, never appreciates itself and its own hallowed worth! That humility, lowliness — the highest gifts of love-fraught, bounteous nature —

MARGARET. Only think of me one little minute; I shall have time enough to think of you.

FAUST. You are much alone, I dare say?

MARGARET. Yes, our household is but small, and yet it must be looked after. We keep no maid; I am obliged to

cook, sweep, knit, and sew, and run early and late. And my mother is so precise in everything! Not that she has such pressing occasion to restrict herself. We might do more than many others. My father left a nice little property—a small house and garden near the town. However, my days at present are tolerably quiet. My brother is a soldier; my little sister is dead. I had my full share of trouble with her, but I would gladly take all the anxiety upon myself again so dear was the child to me.

FAUST. An angel, if it resembled thee!

MARGARET. I brought it up, and it loved me dearly. It was born after my father's death. We gave up my mother for lost, so sad was the condition she then lay in; and she recovered very slowly, by degrees. Thus she could not think of suckling the poor little worm, and so I brought it up, all by myself, with milk and water. It thus became my own. On my arm, in my bosom it smiled and sprawled and grew.

FAUST. You have felt, no doubt, the purest joy.

MARGARET. And many anxious hours, too. The little one's cradle stood at night by my bedside; it could scarcely move but I was awake; now obliged to give it drink; now to take it to bed to me; now, when it would not be quiet, to rise from bed and walk up and down in the room, dandling it; and early in the morning, stand already at the wash-tub; then go to market, and see to the house; and so on, day after day. Under such circumstances, sir, one is not always in spirits; but food and rest relish the better for it. (*They pass on.*)

MARTHA. The poor women have the worst of it. It is no easy matter to convert an old bachelor.

MEPHISTOPHELES. It only depends on one like you to teach me better.

MARTHA. Tell me plainly, sir, have you never met with any one? Has your heart never attached itself anywhere?

MEPHISTOPHELES. The proverb says—a hearth of one's own, a good wife, are worth pearls and gold.

MARTHA. I mean, have you never had an inclination?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I have been in general very politely received.

MARTHA. I wished to say—was your heart never seriously affected?

MEPHISTOPHELES. One should never venture to joke with women.

MARTHA. Ah, you do not understand me.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I am heartily sorry for it. But I understand — that you are very kind. (*They pass on.*)

FAUST. You knew me again, you little angel, the moment I entered the garden.

MARGARET. Did you not see it? I cast down my eyes.

FAUST. And you forgive the liberty I took — my imprudence, as you were leaving the cathedral?

MARGARET. I was quite abashed. Such a thing had never happened to me before; no one could say anything bad of me. Alas, thought I, has he seen anything bold, unmaidenly, in thy behavior? It seemed as if the thought suddenly struck him, "I need stand on no ceremony with this girl." I must own I knew not what began to stir in your favor *here*; but certainly I was right angry with myself for not being able to be more angry with you.

FAUST. Sweet love!

MARGARET. Wait a moment! (*She plucks a star-flower and picks off the leaves one after the other.*)

FAUST. What is that for — a nosegay?

MARGARET. No, only for a game.

FAUST. How!

MARGARET. Go! You will laugh at me. (*She plucks off the leaves, and murmurs to herself.*)

FAUST. What are you murmuring?

MARGARET (*half aloud*). He loves me — he loves me not!

FAUST. Thou angelic being!

MARGARET *continues*. Loves me — not — loves me — not — (*Plucking off the last leaf with fond delight.*) He loves me!

FAUST. Yes, my child. Let this flower-prophecy be to thee as a judgment from heaven. He loves thee! Dost thou understand what that means? He loves thee! (*He takes both her hands.*)

MARGARET. I tremble all over!

FAUST. Oh, tremble not. Let this look, let this pressure of the hand, say to thee what is unutterable! — to give ourselves up wholly, and feel a bliss which must be eternal! Eternal! — its end would be despair! No, no end! no end! (*MARGARET presses his hand, breaks from him, and runs away. He stands a moment in thought, and then follows her.*)

MARTHA (*approaching*). The night is coming on.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Ay, and we will away.

MARTHA. I would ask you to stay here longer, but it is a wicked place. One would suppose no one had any other object or occupation than to gape after his neighbor's incomings and outgoings. And one comes to be talked about, behave as one will. And our pair of lovers?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Have flown up the walk yonder. Wanton butterflies!

MARTHA. He seems fond of her.

MEPHISTOPHELES. And she of him. Such is the way of the world.

A SUMMER-HOUSE.

(MARGARET runs in, gets behind the door, holds the tip of her finger to her lips, and peeps through the crevice.)

MARGARET. He comes!

FAUST (*enters*). Ah, rogue, is it thus you trifle with me? I have caught you at last. (*He kisses her.*)

MARGARET (*embracing him, and returning the kiss*). Dearest! from my heart I love thee! (MEPHISTOPHELES *knocks*.)

FAUST (*stamping*). Who is there?

MEPHISTOPHELES. A friend.

FAUST. A brute.

MEPHISTOPHELES. It is time to part, I believe.

MARTHA (*comes up*). Yes, it is late, sir.

FAUST. May I not accompany you?

MARGARET. My mother would—farewell!

FAUST. Must I then go? Farewell!

MARTHA. Adieu!

MARGARET. Till our next speedy meeting! (FAUST and MEPHISTOPHELES *exeunt*.)

MARGARET. Gracious God! How many things such a man can think about! How abashed I stand in his presence, and say yea to everything! I am but a poor, silly girl; I cannot conceive what he sees in me.

FOREST AND CAVERN.

FAUST (*alone*). Sublime spirit! thou gavest me, gavest me everything I prayed for. Not in vain didst thou turn thy face in fire to me. Thou gavest me glorious nature for a kingdom, with power to feel, to enjoy her. It is not merely a cold, wondering visit that thou permittest me; thou grudgest me not to look into her deep bosom, as into the bosom of a friend. Thou passest in review before me the whole series of animated things, and teachest me to know my brothers in the still wood, in the air, and in the water. And when the storm roars and creaks in the forest, and the giant pine, precipitating its neighbor-boughs and neighbor-stems, sweeps, crushing, down—and the mountain thunders with a dead hollow muttering to the fall,—then thou bearest me off to the sheltered cave; then thou showest me to myself, and deep mysterious wonders of my own breast reveal themselves. And when the clear moon, with its soothing influences, rises full in my view,—from the wall-like rocks, out of the damp underwood, the silvery forms of past ages hover up to me, and soften the austere pleasure of contemplation. Oh, now I feel that nothing perfect falls to the lot of man! With this beatitude, which brings me nearer and nearer to the gods, thou gavest me the companion, whom already I cannot do without; although, cold and insolent, he degrades me in my own eyes, and turns thy gifts to nothing with a breath. He is ever kindling a wild-fire in my heart for that lovely image. Thus do I reel from desire to enjoyment, and in enjoyment languish for desire.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*enters*). Have you not had enough of this kind of life? How can you delight in it so long? It is all well enough to try once, but then on again to something new.

FAUST. I would you had something else to do than to plague me in my happier hour.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Well, well! I will let you alone, if you wish. You need not say so in earnest. Truly, it is little to lose an ungracious, peevish, and crazy companion in you. The livelong day one has one's hands full. One cannot read in your worship's face what pleases you, and what to let alone.

FAUST. That is just the right tone! He would fain be thanked for wearying me to death.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Poor son of earth! what sort of life would you have led without me! I have cured you, for some time to come, of the crotchets of imagination, and, but for

me, you would already have taken your departure from this globe. Why mope in caverns and fissures of rocks, like an owl? Why sip in nourishment from sodden moss and dripping stone, like a toad? A fair, sweet pastime! The doctor still sticks to you.

FAUST. Dost thou understand what new life-power this wandering in the desert procures for me? Ay, couldst thou have but a dim presentiment of it, thou wouldst be devil enough to grudge me my enjoyment.

MEPHISTOPHELES. A super-earthly pleasure! To lie on the mountains in darkness and dew — clasp earth and heaven ecstatically — swell yourself up to a godhead — rake through the earth's marrow with your thronging presentiments — feel the whole six days' work in your bosom — in haughty might enjoy I know not what — now overflow in love's raptures, into all, with your earthly nature cast aside — and then the lofty intuition (*with a gesture*) — I must not say how — to end!

FAUST. Fie upon you!

MEPHISTOPHELES. That is not your mind. You are entitled to cry fie! so morally! We must not name to chaste ears what chaste hearts cannot renounce. And, in a word, I do not grudge you the pleasure of lying to yourself occasionally. But you will not keep it up long. You are already driven back into your old course, and, if this holds much longer, will be fretted into madness or torture and horror. Enough of this! your little love sits yonder at home, and all to her is confined and melancholy. You are never absent from her thoughts. She loves you all subduingly. At first, your passion came overflowing, like a snow-flushed rivulet; you have poured it into her heart and, lo! your rivulet is dry again. Methinks, instead of reigning in the woods, your worship would do well to reward the poor young monkey for her love. The time seems lamentably long to her; she stands at the window and watches the clouds roll away over the old walls of the town. "Were I a bird!" so runs her song, during all the day and half the night. One while she is cheerful, mostly sad, — one while fairly outwept; — then, again, composed, to all appearance — and ever lovesick!

FAUST. Serpent! serpent!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*aside*). Good! if I can but catch you!

FAUST. Reprobate! take thyself away, and name not the lovely woman. Bring not the desire for her sweet body before my half-distracted senses again!

MEPHISTOPHELES. What is to be done, then? She thinks that you are off, and in some manner you are.

FAUST. I am near her, and were I ever so far off I can never forget, never lose her. Nay, I already envy the very body of the Lord when her lips are touching it.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Very well, my friend. I have often envied you the twin-pair, which feed among roses.

FAUST. Pander! begone.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Good again! You rail, and I cannot help laughing. The God who made lad and lass well understood the noble calling of making opportunity, too. But away, it is a mighty matter to be sad about! You should betake yourself to your mistress' chamber — not, I think, to death.

FAUST. What are the joys of heaven in her arms? Let me kindle on her breast! Do I not feel her wretchedness unceasingly? Am I not the outcast — the houseless one? — the monster without aim or rest, — who, like a cataract, dashed from rock to rock, in devouring fury towards the precipice? And she, upon the side, with childlike simplicity, in her little cot upon the little mountain field, and all her homely cares embraced within that little world! And I, the hated of God — it was not enough for me to grasp the rocks and smite them to shatters! Her, her peace, must I undermine! — Hell, thou couldst not rest without this sacrifice. Devil, help me to shorten the pang! Let what must be, be quickly! Let her fate fall crushing upon me, and both of us perish together!

MEPHISTOPHELES. How it seethes and glows again! Get in, and comfort her, you fool! — When such a noddle sees no outlet it immediately represents to itself the end. He who bears himself bravely, forever! And yet, on other occasions, you have a fair spice of the devil in you. I know nothing in the world more insipid than a devil that despairs.

MARGARET'S ROOM.

MARGARET *alone, at the spinning-wheel.*

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy;
I shall find it never,
And never more.

Where I have him not,
Is the grave to me.
The whole world
Is embittered to me.

My poor head
Is wandering,
My feeble sense
Distraught.

My peace is gone;
My heart is heavy;
I shall find it never,
And never more.

For him alone look I
Out at the window!
For him alone go I
Out of the house!

His stately step,
His noble form;
The smile of his mouth,
The power of his eyes,

And of his speech
The witching flow;
The pressure of his hand,
And, ah! his kiss!

My peace is gone;
My heart is heavy;
I shall find it never,
And never more.

My bosom struggles
After him.
Ah! could I enfold him
And hold him! and kiss him
As I would!
On his kisses
Would I die away.

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MARTHA'S GARDEN.

MARGARET — FAUST.

MARGARET. Promise me, Henry!

FAUST. What I can!

MARGARET. Now, tell me, how do you feel as to religion?
You are a dear, good man, but I believe you don't think
much of it.

FAUST. No more of that, my child! you feel I love you; I would lay down my life for those I love, nor would I deprive any of their feeling and their church.

MARGARET. That is not right; we must believe in it.

FAUST. Must we?

MARGARET. Ah! if I had any influence over you! Besides, you do not honor the holy sacraments.

FAUST. I honor them.

MARGARET. But without desiring them. It is long since you went to mass or confession. Do you believe in God?

FAUST. My love, who dares say I believe in God? You may ask priests and philosophers, and their answer will appear but a mockery of the questioner.

MARGARET. You don't believe, then?

FAUST. Mistake me not, thou lovely one! Who dare name him? and who avow: "I believe in him?" Who feel — and dare to say; "I believe in him not?" The All-embracer, the All-sustainer, does he not embrace and sustain thee, me, himself? Does not the heaven arch itself there above? — Lies not the earth firm here below? — And do not eternal stars rise, kindly twinkling, on high? — Are we not looking into each other's eyes, and is not all thronging to thy head and heart, and weaving in eternal mystery, invisibly — visibly, about thee? With it fill thy heart, big as it is, and when thou art wholly blest in the feeling, then call it what thou wilt! Call it Bliss! — Heart! — Love! — God! I have no name for it! Feeling is all in all. Name is sound and smoke, clouding heaven's glow.

MARGARET. That is all very fine and good. The priest says nearly the same, only with somewhat different words.

FAUST. All hearts in all places under the blessed light of day say it, each in its own language — why not in mine?

MARGARET. Thus taken, it may pass; but, for all that, there is something wrong about it, for thou hast no Christianity.

FAUST. Dear child!

MARGARET. I have long been grieved at the company I see you in.

FAUST. How so?

MARGARET. The man you have with you is hateful to me in my inmost soul. Nothing in the whole course of my life has given my heart such a pang as the repulsive visage of that man.

FAUST. Fear him not, dear child.

MARGARET. His presence makes my blood creep. With this exception, I have kind feelings towards everybody. But, much as I long to see you, I have an unaccountable horror of that man, and hold him for a rogue besides, God forgive me if I do him wrong.

FAUST. There must be such oddities, notwithstanding.

MARGARET. I would not live with the like of him. Whenever he comes to the door, he looks in so mockingly, and with fury but half-suppressed; one sees that he sympathizes with nothing. It is written on his forehead that he can love no living soul. I feel so happy in thy arms — so unrestrained — in such glowing abandonment; and his presence closes up my heart's core.

FAUST. You misgiving angel, you!

MARGARET. It overcomes me to such a degree that when he but chances to join us, I even think I do not love you any longer. And in his presence I should never be able to pray; and this eats into my heart. You, too, Henry, must feel the same.

FAUST. You have an antipathy, that is all.

MARGARET. I must go now.

FAUST. Ah, can I never recline one little hour undisturbed upon thy bosom, and press heart to heart, and soul to soul!

MARGARET. Ah! did I but sleep alone! I would gladly leave the door unbolted for you this very night. But my mother does not sleep sound, and were she to catch us I should die upon the spot.

FAUST. Thou angel, there is no fear of that. You see this phial? Only three drops in her drink will gently envelop nature in deep sleep.

MARGARET. What would I not do for thy sake? It will do her no harm, I hope.

FAUST. Would I recommend it to you, my love, if it could?

MARGARET. If, best of men, I do but look on you, I know not what drives me to comply with your will. I have already done so much for you that next to nothing now remains for me to do. (*Exit.*)

(MEPHISTOPHELES enters.)

MEPHISTOPHELES. The silly monkey! is she gone.

FAUST. Hast thou been playing the spy again?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I heard what passed, plainly enough. You were catechized, doctor. Much good may it do you.

The girls are certainly deeply interested in knowing whether a man be pious and plain after the old fashion. They say to themselves: "If he is pliable in that matter, he will also be pliable to us."

FAUST. Thou, monster as thou art, canst not conceive how this fond, faithful soul, full of her faith, which, according to her notions, is alone capable of conferring eternal happiness, feels a holy horror to think that she must hold her best beloved for lost.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Thou super-sensual, sensual lover, a chit of a girl leads thee by the nose.

FAUST. Thou abortion of dirt and fire!

MEPHISTOPHELES. And she is knowing in physiognomy, too. In my presence she feels she knows not how. This little mask betokens some hidden sense. She feels that I am most assuredly a genius — perhaps the devil himself. To-night, then —?

FAUST. What is that to you?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I have my pleasure in it, though.

AT THE WELL.

MARGARET *and* BESSY *with* pitchers.

BESSY. Have you heard nothing of Barbara?

MARGARET. Not a word. I go very little abroad.

BESSY. Certainly, Sybella told it me to-day. She has even made a fool of herself at last. That comes of playing the fine lady.

MARGARET. How so?

BESSY. It is a bad business. She feeds two now when she eats and drinks.

MARGARET. Ah!

BESSY. She is rightly served at last. What a time she has hung upon the fellow! There was a promenading and a gallanting to village junketings and dancing booths — she, forsooth, must be the first in everything — he was ever treating her to tarts and wine. She thought great things of her beauty, and was so lost to honor as not to be ashamed to receive presents from him. There was then a hugging and kissing — and, lo, the flower is gone!

MARGARET. Poor thing!

BESSY. You really pity her! When the like of us were at the spinning our mothers never let us go down at night. She stood sweet with her lover; on the bench before the door, and in the dark walk, the time was never too long for them. But now she may humble herself, and do penance in a white sheet, in the church.

MARGARET. He will surely make her his wife.

BESSY. He would be a fool if he did. A brisk young fellow has the world before him. Besides he's off.

MARGARET. That's not handsome.

BESSY. If she gets him, it will go ill with her. The boys will tear her garland for her, and we will strew cut straw before her door. (*Exit.*)

MARGARET (*going home*). How stoutly I could formerly revile, if a poor maiden chanced to make a slip! How I could never find words enough to speak of another's shame! How black it seemed to me! and, blacken it as I would, it was never black enough for me—and blessed myself and felt so grand, and am now myself a prey to sin? Yet—all that drove me to it, was, God knows, so sweet, so dear!

ZWINGER.

(*In the niche of the wall a devotional image of the Mater Dolorosa, with pots of flowers before it.*)

MARGARET places fresh flowers in the pots.

Ah, incline,
Thou full of pain,
Thy countenance graciously to my distress.

The sword in thy heart,
With thousand pangs
Up-lookest thou to thy Son's death.

To the Father look'st thou,
And sendest sighs
Aloft for his and thy distress.
Who feels
How rages
My torment to the quick?
How the poor heart in me throbbeth,
How it trembleth, how it yearneth
Knowest thou, and thou alone!

Whitherso'er I go,
 What woe, what woe, what woe,
 Grows within my bosom *here!*
 Hardly, alas, am I alone,
 I weep, I weep, I weep,
 My heart is bursting within me.
 The flower-pots on my window-sill
 Bedewed I with my tears, alas!
 When I at morning's dawn
 Plucked these flowers for thee.
 When brightly in my chamber
 The rising sun's rays shone,
 Already, in all wretchedness,
 Was I sitting up in my bed.
 Help! rescue me from shame and death!
 Ah, incline,
 Thou full of pain,
 Thy countenance graciously to my distress!

NIGHT.

STREET BEFORE MARGARET'S DOOR.

VALENTINE (*a soldier, MARGARET'S brother*). When I made one of a company, where many like to show off, and the fellows were loud in their praises of the flower of maidens, and drowned their commendation in bumpers, — with my elbows leaning on the board, I sat in quiet confidence, and listened to all their swaggering! then I stroke my beard with a smile, and take the bumper in my hand, and say: “All very well in its way! but is there one in the whole country to compare with my dear Margaret; — who is fit to hold a candle to my sister?” Hob and nob, kling! klang! so it went round! Some shouted, “He is right; she is the pearl of the whole sex;” and all those praisers were dumb. And now — it is enough to make one tear out one's hair by the roots, and run up the walls — I shall be twitted by the sneers and taunts of every knave, shall sit like a bankrupt debtor, and sweat at every chance word. And though I might crush them at a blow, yet I could not call them liars. Who comes there? Who is slinking this way? If I mistake not, there are two of them. If it is he, I will have at him at once; he shall not leave this spot alive.

FAUST. How, from the window of the sacristy there, the light of the eternal lamp flickers upwards, and glimmers

weaker and weaker at the sides, and darkness thickens round! Just so is all night-like in my breast.

MEPHISTOPHELES. And I feel languishing like the tom-cat, that sneaks along the fire-ladders and then creeps stealthily round the walls. I feel quite virtuously, — with a spice of thievish pleasure, a spice of wantonness. In such a manner does the glorious Walpurgis night already thrill me through every limb. The day after to-morrow it comes round to us again; there one knows what one wakes for.

FAUST. In the meantime, can that be the treasure rising, — that which I see glimmering yonder?

MEPHISTOPHELES. You will soon enjoy the lifting up of the casket. I lately took a squint at it. There are capital lion-dollars within.

FAUST. Not a trinket — not a ring — to adorn my lovely mistress with?

MEPHISTOPHELES. I think I saw some such thing there as a sort of pearl necklace.

FAUST. That is well. I feel sorry when I go to her without a present.

MEPHISTOPHELES. You ought not to regret having some enjoyment gratis. Now that the heavens are studded thick with stars, you shall hear a true piece of art. I will sing her a moral song, to make a fool of her the more certainly. (*He sings to the guitar.*) What are you doing here, Catherine, before your lover's door at morning dawn? Stay, and beware! he lets thee in a maid, not to come out a maid. Beware! If it be done, then good night to you, you poor, poor things. If you love yourselves, do nothing to pleasure any spoiler, except with the ring on the finger.

VALENTINE (*comes forward*). Whom art thou luring here? by God! thou cursed rat-catcher! First, to the devil with the instrument, then to the devil with the singer.

MEPHISTOPHELES. The guitar is broken to pieces! It is all up with it!

VALENTINE. Now, then, for a skull-cracking.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to FAUST*). Don't give way, doctor! Courage! Stick close, and do as I tell you. Out with your toasting-iron! Thrust away, and I will parry.

VALENTINE. Parry that!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Why not?

VALENTINE. And that!

MEPHISTOPHELES. To be sure.

VALENTINE. I believe the devil is fighting. What is that? My hand is already getting powerless.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to FAUST*). Thrust home!

VALENTINE (*falls*). Oh, torture!

MEPHISTOPHELES. The clown is tamed now. But away! We must vanish in a twinkling, for a horrible outcry is already raised. I am perfectly at home with the police, but should find it hard to clear scores with the criminal courts.

MARTHA (*at the window*). Out! out!

MARGARET (*at the window*). Bring a light!

MARTHA (*as before*). They are railing and scuffling, screaming and fighting.

PEOPLE. Here lies one dead, already!

MARTHA (*coming out*). Have the murderers escaped?

MARGARET (*coming out*). Who lies here?

PEOPLE. Thy mother's son.

MARGARET. Almighty God! what misery!

VALENTINE. I am dying! that is soon said, and sooner still done. What are you women howling and wailing about? Approach and listen to me. (*All come round him.*) Look ye, Margaret! you are still young! you are not yet adroit enough, and manage your matters ill. I tell it you in confidence; since you are, once for all, a whore, be one in good earnest.

MARGARET. Brother! God! What do you mean?

VALENTINE. Leave God out of the game. What is done, alas! cannot be undone, and things will take their course. You begin privately with one; more of them will soon follow; and when a dozen have had you, the whole town will have you, too.

When first shame is born, she is brought into the world clandestinely, and the veil of night is drawn over her head and ears. Ay, people would fain stifle her. But when she grows and waxes big, she walks flauntingly in open day, and yet is not a whit the fairer. The uglier her face becomes the more she courts the light of day.

I already see the time when all honest citizens will turn aside from you, you whore, as from an infected corpse. Your heart will sink within you when they look you in the face. You will wear no golden chain again! No more will you stand at the altar in the church, or take pride in a fair lace collar at the dance. You will hide yourself in some dark, miserable corner, amongst beggars and cripples, and, **even** should God forgive you, be cursed upon earth!

MARTHA. Commend your soul to God's mercy. Will you yet heap the sin of slander upon your soul?

VALENTINE. Could I but get at thy withered body, thou shameless bawd, I should hope to find a full measure of pardon for all my sins!

MARGARET. My brother! Oh this agonizing pang!

VALENTINE. Have done with tears, I tell you. When you renounced honor, you gave me the deepest heart-stab of all. I go through death's sleep unto God, a soldier and a brave one. (He dies.)

CATHEDRAL.

SERVICE, ORGAN, AND ANTHEM.

MARGARET *amongst a number of People.* EVIL SPIRIT *behind* MARGARET.

EVIL SPIRIT.

How different was it with thee, Margaret,
 When still full of innocence
 Thou camest to the altar there —
 Out of the well-worn little book,
 Lispedst prayers,
 Half child-spirit,
 Half God in the heart!
 Margaret!
 Where is thy head?
 In thy heart
 What crime?
 Prayest thou for thy mother's soul — who
 Slept over into long, long pain through thee?
 Whose blood on thy threshold?
 — And under thy heart
 Stirs it not quickening, even now,
 Torturing itself and thee
 With its foreboding presence?

MARGARET.

Woe! woe! —
 Would that I were free from the thoughts
 That come over and across me
 Despite of me!

CHORUS.

Dies iræ, dies illa
 Solvet sæculum in favilla.

(*Organ plays.*)

EVIL SPIRIT.

Horror seizes thee!
The trump sounds!
The graves tremble!
And thy heart
From the repose of its ashes
For fiery torment
Brought to life again
Trembles up!

MARGARET.

Would that I were hence.
I feel as if the organ
Stifed my breath,
As if the anthem
Dissolved my heart's care!

CHORUS.

Judex ergo cum cedebit
Quidquid latet adparebit
Nil inultum remanebit.

MARGARET.

I feel so thronged!
The wall-pillars
Close on me!
The vaulted roof
Presses on me!— Air!

EVIL SPIRIT.

Hide thyself! sin and shame
Remain unhidden.
Air? Light?
Woe to thee!

CHORUS.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus.

EVIL SPIRIT.

The glorified from thee
Avert their faces.
The pure shudder
To reach thee their hands.
Woe!

CHORUS.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?

MARGARET.

Neighbor; your smelling-bottle!

(She swoons away.)

MAY-DAY NIGHT.

THE HARTZ MOUNTAINS.

District of Schirke and Elend.

FAUST—MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Do you not long for a broomstick? For my part I should be glad of the roughest he-goat. By this road we are still far from our destination.

FAUST. So long as I feel fresh upon my legs this knotted stick suffices me. What is the use of shortening the way? To creep along the labyrinth of the vales, and then ascend these rocks, from which the ever-bubbling spring precipitates itself,—this is the pleasure which gives zest to such a path. The spring is already weaving in the birch-trees, and even the pine is beginning to feel it,—ought it not to have some effect upon our limbs?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Verily, I feel nothing of it. All is wintry in my body, and I should prefer frost and snow upon my path. How melancholy the imperfect disk of the red moon rises with belated glare! and gives so bad a light, that, at every step, one runs against a tree or a rock. With your leave, I will call a will-o'-the-wisp. I see one yonder, burning right merrily. Holloa, there, my friend! may I entreat your company? Why wilt thou blaze away so uselessly? Be so good as to light us up along here.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP. Out of reverence, I hope, I shall succeed in subduing my unsteady nature. Our course is ordinarily but a zigzag one.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Ha! ha! you think to imitate men. But go straight, in the devil's name, or I will blow your flickering life out.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP. I see well that you are master here, and will willingly accommodate myself to you. But consider! the mountain is magic-mad to-night, and if a will-o'-the-wisp is to show you the way you must not be too particular.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, WILL-O'-THE-WISP (*in alternate song*). Into the sphere of dreams and enchantments, it seems, have we entered. Lead us right, and do yourself credit!—that we may advance betimes in the wide, desolate regions.

See trees after trees, how rapidly they move by; and the cliffs, that bow, and the long-snouted rocks, how they snort, how they blow!

Through the stones, through the turf, brook and brookling hurry down. Do I hear rustling? do I hear songs? do I hear the sweet plaint of love?—voices of those blest days—what we hope, what we love! And Echo, like the tale of old times, sends back the sound.

Tu-whit-tu-who — it sounds nearer; the owl, the pewit, and the jay, — have they all remained awake? Are those salamanders through the brake, with their long legs, thick paunches? And the roots, like snakes, wind from out of rock and sand, and stretch forth strange filaments to terrify, to seize us: from coarse speckles, instinct with life, they set polypus-fibres for the traveller. And the mice, thousand-colored, in whole tribes, through the moss and through the heath! And the glow-worms fly, in crowded swarms, a confounding escort.

But tell me whether we stand still, or whether we are moving on. Everything seems to turn round, — rocks and trees, which make grimaces, and the will-o'-the-wisps, which multiply, which swell themselves out.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Keep a stout hold of my skirt! Here is a central peak, from which one sees with wonder how Mammon is glowing in the mountain.

FAUST. How strangely a melancholy light, of morning red, glimmers through the mountain gorges, and quivers even to the deepest recesses of the precipice! Here rises a mine-damp, there float exhalations. Here the glow sparkles out of gauze-like vapor, then steals along like a fine thread, and then again bursts forth like a fountain. Here it winds, a whole track, with a hundred veins, through the valley; and here, in the compressed corner, it scatters itself at once. There sparks are sputtering near, like golden sand unsprinkled in the air. But, see the wall of rocks is on fire in all its height.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Does not Sir Mammon illuminate his palace magnificently for this festival? It is lucky that you have seen it. I already see traces of the boisterous guests.

FAUST. How the storm-blast is raging through the air. With what thumps it strikes against my neck!

MEPHISTOPHELES. You must lay hold of the old ribs of the rock or it will hurl you down into this abyss. A

mist thickens the night. Hark! what a crashing through the forest! The owls fly scared away. Hark, to the splintering of the pillars of the evergreen palaces! the crackling and snapping of the boughs, the mighty groaning of the trunks, the creaking and yawning of the roots! — All come crashing down, one over the other, in fearfully-confused fall; and the winds hiss and howl through the wreck-covered cliffs! Dost thou hear voices aloft? — in the distance? — close at hand? — Ay, a raving witch-song streams along the whole mountain.

THE WITCHES (*in chorus*). To the Brocken the witches repair! The stubble is yellow, the sown-fields are green. — There the huge multitude is assembled. Sir Urian sits at the top. On they go, over stone and stock; the witch —s, the he-goat —s.

VOICES. Old Baubo comes alone; she rides upon a farrow sow.

CHORUS. Then honor to whom honor is due! Mother Baubo to the front, and lead the way! A proper sow and mother upon her, — then follows the whole swarm of witches.

VOICE. Which way did you come?

VOICE. By Ilsestein. I there peeped into the owl's nest. She gave me such a look!

VOICE. Oh, drive to hell! What a rate you are riding at!

VOICE. She has grazed me in passing; only look at the wound!

CHORUS OF WITCHES. The way is broad — the way is long. What mad throng is this? The fork sticks — the besom scratches: the child is suffocated — the mother bursts.

WIZARDS — HALF-CHORUS. We steal along like snails in their house; the women are all before; for, in going to the house of the wicked one, woman is a thousand steps in advance.

THE OTHER HALF. We do not take that so, precisely. The woman does it with a thousand steps; but, let her make as much haste as she can, the man does it at a single bound.

VOICES (*above*). Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee!

VOICES (*from below*). We should like to mount with you. We wash and are thoroughly clean, but we are ever barren.

BOTH CHORUSES. The wind is still, the stars fly, the melancholy moon is glad to hide herself. The magic-choir sputters forth sparks by thousands in its whizzing.

VOICE (*from below*). Hold! hold!

VOICE (*from above*). Who calls there, from the cleft in the rock?

VOICE (*from below*). Take me with you! take me with you! I have been mounting for three hundred years already, and cannot reach the top. I would fain be with my fellows.

BOTH CHORUSES. The besom carries, the stick carries, the fork carries, the he-goat carries. Who cannot raise himself to-night is lost forever.

DEMI-WITCH (*below*). I have been tottering after such a length of time, — how far the others are ahead already! I have no rest at home, — and don't get it here, neither.

CHORUS OF WITCHES. The salve gives courage to the witches; a rag is good for a sail; every trough makes a good ship; he will never fly who flew not to-night.

BOTH CHORUSES. And when we round the peak, sweep along the ground, and cover the heath far and wide with your swarm of witch-hood. (*They let themselves down.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES. There's crowding and pushing, rustling and clattering! There's whizzing and twirling, bustling and babbling! There's glittering, sparkling, stinking, burning! A true witch-element! But stick close to me, or we shall be separated in a moment. Where art thou?

FAUST (*in the distance*). Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES. What! already torn away so far? I must exert my authority as master. Room! Squire Voland comes! Make room, sweet people, make room! Here, Doctor, take hold of me! and now, at one bound, let us get clear of the crowd. It is too mad, even for the like of me. Hard by there, shines something with a peculiar light. Something attracts me towards those bushes. Come along, we will slip in there.

FAUST. Thou spirit of contradiction! But go on! thou may'st lead me. But it was wisely done, to be sure! We repair to the Brocken on Walpurgis night — to try and isolate ourselves when we get there.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Only see what variegated flames! A merry club is met together. One is not alone in a small company.

FAUST. I should prefer being above, though! I already see flame and eddying smoke. Yonder the multitude is streaming to the Evil One. Many a riddle must there be untied.

MEPHISTOPHELES. And many a riddle is also tied anew.

Let the great world bluster as it will, we will here house ourselves in peace. It is an old saying, that in the great world one makes little worlds. Yonder I see young witches, naked and bare, and old ones who prudently cover themselves. Be compliant, if only for my sake; the trouble is small, the sport is great. I hear the tuning of instruments. Confounded jangle! One must accustom one's self to it. Come along, come along! it cannot be otherwise. I will go forward and introduce you, and I shall lay you under fresh obligation. What sayest thou, friend? This is no trifling space. Only look? you can hardly see the end. A hundred fires are burning in a row. People are dancing, talking, cooking, drinking, love-making! Now, tell me where anything better is to be found!

FAUST. To introduce us here, do you intend to present yourself as wizard or devil?

MEPHISTOPHELES. In truth, I am much used to go *incognito*. But one shows one's orders on gala days. I have no garter to distinguish me, but the cloven foot is held in high honor here. Do you see the snail there? she comes creeping up, and with her feelers has already found out something in me. Even if I would, I could not deny myself here. But come! we will go from fire to fire; I will be the pander, and you shall be the gallant. (*To some who are sitting round some expiring embers.*) Old gentlemen, what are you doing here at the extremity? I should commend you, did I find you nicely in the middle, in the thick of the riot and youthful revelry. Every one is surely enough alone at home.

GENERAL. Who can put his trust in nations, though he has done ever so much for them? For with the people, as with the women, youth has always the upper hand.

MINISTER. At present, people are wide astray from the right path—the good old ones for me! For verily, when we were all in all, that was the true golden age.

PARVENU. We, too, were certainly no fools, and often did what we ought not. But now, everything is turned topsy-turvy, and just when we wished to keep it firm.

AUTHOR. Who nowadays, speaking generally, likes to read a work of even moderate sense? And as for the rising generation they were never so malapert.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*who all at once appears very old*). I feel the people ripe for doomsday, now that I ascend the witch-mountain for the last time; and because my own cask runs thick, the world also is come to the dregs.

A WITCH (*who sells old clothes and frippery*). Do not pass by in this manner, gentlemen! Now is your time. Look at my wares attentively; I have them of all sorts. And yet there is nothing in my shop which has not its fellow upon earth—that has not, at some time or other, wrought proper mischief to mankind and to the world. There is no dagger here from which blood has not flowed; no chalice from which hot consuming poison has not been poured into a healthy body; no trinket which has not seduced some amiable woman; no sword which has not cut some tie asunder, which has not perchance stabbed an adversary from behind.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Cousin, you understand but ill the temper of the times. Done, happened! Happened, done! Take to dealing in novelties; novelties only have any attraction for us.

FAUST. If I can but keep my senses! This is a fair with a vengeance!

MEPHISTOPHELES. The whole throng struggles upwards. You think to shove, and you yourself are shoved.

FAUST. Who, then, is that?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Mark her well, that is Lilith.

FAUST. Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Adam's first wife. Beware of her fair hair, of that ornament in which she shines pre-eminent. When she ensnares a young man with it she does not let him off again so easily.

FAUST. There sit two, the old one with the young one. They have already capered a good bit!

MEPHISTOPHELES. That has neither stop nor stay to-night. A new dance is beginning; come we will set to.

FAUST (*dancing with the young one*). I had once upon a time a fair dream. In it I saw an apple-tree; two lovely apples glittered on it; they enticed me, I climbed up.

THE FAIR ONE. You are very fond of apples, and have been so from Paradise downwards. I feel moved with joy that my garden also bears such.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*with the old one*). I had once upon a time a wild dream. In it I saw a cleft tree. It had a — — —; — as it was it pleased me, notwithstanding.

THE OLD ONE. I present my best respects to the knight of the cloven foot. Let him have a — — — ready, if he does not fear — — —.

PROCTOPHANTASMIST. Confounded mob! how dare you? Was it not long since demonstrated to you? A spirit never stands upon ordinary feet; and you are actually dancing away like us other mortals!

THE FAIR ONE. What does he come to our ball for, then?

FAUST (*dancing*). Ha! He is absolutely everywhere. He must appraise what others dance. If he cannot talk about every step, the step is as good as never made at all. He is most vexed when we go forwards. If you would but turn round in a circle, as he does in his old mill, he would term that good, I dare say; particularly were you to consult him about it.

PROCTOPHANTASMIST. You are still there, then! No, that is unheard of! But vanish! We have enlightened the world, you know. That devil's crew, they pay no attention to rules. We are so wise, and Tegel is haunted, notwithstanding! How long have I been sweeping away at the delusion; and it never becomes clean? It is unheard of!

THE FAIR ONE. Have done boring us here at any rate, then!

PROCTOPHANTASMIST. I tell you, spirits, to your faces, I endure not the despotism of the spirit. My spirit cannot exercise it. (*The dancing goes on.*) To-night I see I shall succeed in nothing; but I am always ready for a journey; and still hope, before my last step, to get the better of devils and poets.

MEPHISTOPHELES. He will forthwith seat himself in a puddle; that is his mode of soothing himself; and when leeches have amused themselves on his rump, he is cured of spirits and spirit. (*To FAUST, who has left the dance.*) Why do you leave the pretty girl who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

FAUST. Ah! in the middle of the song a red mouse jumped out of her mouth.

MEPHISTOPHELES. There is nothing out of the way in that. One must not be too nice about such matters. Enough that the mouse was not gray. Who cares for such things in a moment of enjoyment?

FAUST. Then I saw —

MEPHISTOPHELES. What?

FAUST. Mephisto, do you see yonder a pale, fair girl, standing alone and far off? She drags herself but slowly from the place; she seems to move with fettered feet. I must own, she seems to me to resemble poor Margaret.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Have nothing to do with that! no good can come of it to any one. It is a creation of enchantment, is lifeless,—an idol. It is not well to meet it; the blood of man thickens at its chill look, and he is well-nigh turned to stone. You have heard, no doubt, of Medusa.

FAUST. In truth they are the eyes of a corpse, which there was no fond hand to close. That is the bosom, which Margaret yielded to me; that is the sweet body which I enjoyed.

MEPHISTOPHELES. *That* is sorcery, thou easily deluded fool! for she wears to every one the semblance of his beloved.

FAUST. What bliss! what suffering! I cannot tear myself from that look. How strangely does a single red line, no thicker than the back of a knife, adorn that lovely neck!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Right! I see it, too. She can also carry her head under her arm, for Perseus has cut it off for her. But ever this fondness for delusion! Come up the hill, however; here all is as merry as in the Prater; and, if I am not bewitched, I actually see a theatre. What is going on here, then?

SERVIBILIS. They will recommence immediately. A new piece, the last of seven;—it is the custom here to give so many. A dilettante has written it, and dilettanti play it. Excuse me, gentlemen, but I must be off. It is my dilettante office to draw up the curtain.

MEPHISTOPHELES. When I find you upon the Blocksberg,—that is just what I approve; for this is the proper place for you.

WALPURGIS-NIGHT'S DREAM.

THEATRE-MANAGER. To-day we rest for once; we, the brave sons of Mieding. Old mountain and damp dale—that is the whole scenery.

HERALD. That the wedding-feast may be golden, fifty years are to be past; but if the quarrel is over, I shall like the golden the better.

OBERON. If ye spirits are with me, this is the time to show it: the king and the queen, they are united anew.

PUCK. When Puck comes and whirls himself about and his foot goes whisking in the dance,—hundreds come after to rejoice along with him.

ARIEL. Ariel awakes the song, in tones of heavenly purity; his music lures many trifles, but it also lures the fair.

OBERON. Wedded ones, who would agree, — let them take a lesson from us two. To make a couple love each other it is only necessary to separate them.

TITANIA. If the husband looks gruff, and the wife be whimsical, take hold of both of them immediately. Conduct me her to the South, and him to the extremity of the North.

ORCHESTRA TUTTI.

FORTISSIMO. Flies' snouts, and gnats' noses, with their kindred! Frog in the leaves, and cricket in the grass: they are the musicians.

SOLO. See, here comes the bagpipe! It is the soap-bubble. Hark to the Schneck-schnicke-schnack through its snub-nose.

SPIRIT THAT IS FASHIONING ITSELF. Spider's foot and toad's belly, and little wings for the little wight! It does not make an animalcula, it is true, but it makes a little poem.

A PAIR OF LOVERS. Little step and high bound, through honey-dew and exhalations. Truly, you trip it me enough, but you do not mount into the air.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER. Is not this masquerading-mockery? Can I believe my eyes? To see the beauteous god, Oberon, here to-night, too!

ORTHODOX. No claws, no tail! Yet it stands beyond a doubt, that, even as "The Gods of Greece," so is he too a devil.

NORTHERN ARTIST. What I catch is at present only sketch-ways, as it were; but I prepare myself betimes for the Italian journey.

PURIST. Ah! my ill-fortune brings me hither; what a constant scene of rioting! and of the whole host of witches, only two are powdered.

YOUNG WITCH. Powder as well as petticoats are for little old and gray women. Therefore I sit naked upon my he-goat, and show a stout body.

MATRON. We have too much good breeding to squabble with you here. But I hope you will rot, young and delicate as you are.

LEADER OF THE BAND. Flies' snouts and gnats' noses, don't swarm so about the naked. Frog in leaves, and cricket in the grass! Continue, however, to keep time, I beg of you.

WEATHERCOCK (*towards one side*). Company to one's heart's content! Truly, nothing but brides! and young bachelors, man for man! the hopefullest people!

WEATHERCOCK (*towards the other side*). And if the ground does not open, to swallow up all of them — with a quick run, I will immediately jump into hell.

XENIEN. We are here as insects, with little sharp nebs, to honor Satan, our worshipful papa, according to his dignity.

HENNINGS. See! how naively they joke together in a crowded troop. They will e'en say, in the end, that they had good hearts.

MUSAGET. I like full well to lose myself in this host of witches; for, truly, I should know how manage these better than Muses.

CI-DEVANT GENIUS OF THE AGE. With proper people, one becomes somebody. Come, take hold of my skirt! The Blocksberg, like the German Parnassus, has a very broad top.

INQUISITIVE TRAVELLER. Tell me, what is the name of that stiff man? He walks with stiff steps. He snuffles everything he can snuffle. "He is scenting out Jesuits."

THE CRANE. I like to fish in clear and even in troubled waters. On the same principle you see the pious gentleman associate even with devils.

WORLDLING. Ay, for the pious, believe me, everything is a vehicle. They actually form many a conventicle here upon the Blocksberg.

DANCER. Here is surely a new choir coming! I hear distant drums. But don't disturb yourselves! there are single-toned bitterns among the reeds.

DANCING-MASTER.* How each throws up his legs! gets on as best he may! The crooked jumps, the clumsy hops, and asks not how it looks.

FIDDLER. How deeply this pack of ragamuffins hate each other, and how gladly they would give each other the finishing blow! the bagpipe unites them here, as Orpheus' lyre the beasts.

DOGMATIST. I will not be put out of my opinion, not by either critics or doubts. The devil, though, must be something; for how else could there be devils?

* This and the following stanza were added in the last complete edition of Goethe's Works.

IDEALIST. Phantasy, this once, is really too masterful in my mind. Truly, if I be that All, I must be beside myself to-day.

REALIST. Entity is a regular plague to me, and cannot but vex me much. I stand here, for the first time, not firm upon my feet.

SUPERNATURALIST. I am greatly pleased at being here, and am delighted with these; for, from devils, I can certainly draw conclusions as to good spirits.

SKEPTIC. They follow the track of the flame, and believe themselves near the treasure. Only doubt (*zweifel*) rhymes to devil (*teufel*). Here I am quite at home.

LEADER OF THE BAND. Frog in the leaves, and cricket in the grass! Confounded dilettranti! Flies' snouts and gnats' noses; you are fine musicians!

THE KNOWING ONES. *Sansouci*, that is the name of the host of merry creatures. There is no longer any walking upon feet, wherefore we walk upon our heads.

THE MALADROIT ONES. In times past we have sponged many a tit-bit; but now, good-bye to all that! Our shoes are danced through; we run on bare soles.

WILL-O'-THE-WISPS. We come from the bog, from which we are just sprung; but we are the glittering gallants here in the dance directly.

STAR-SHOOT. From on high, in star-and-fire-light, I shot hither. I am now lying crooked-ways in the grass; who will help me upon my legs?

THE MASSIVE ONES. Room! room! and round about! so down go the grass-stalks. Spirits are coming, but, spirits as they are, they have plump limbs.

PUCK. Don't tread so heavily, like elephants' calves; and the plumpest on this day be the stout Puck himself.

ARIEL. If kind nature gave — if the spirit gave you wings, follow my light track up to the hill of roses!

ORCHESTRA (*pianissimo*). Drifting clouds, and wreathed mists, brighten from on high! Breeze in the leaves, and wind in the rushes, and all is dissipated!

A GLOOMY DAY.—A PLAIN.

FAUST — MEPHISTOPHELES.

FAUST. In misery! Despairing! Long a wretched wanderer upon the earth, and now a prisoner! The dear, unhappy being, cooped up in the dungeon, as a malefactor for horrid tortures. Even to that! to that! Treacherous, worthless Spirit, and this hast thou concealed from me! Stand, only stand? roll thy devilish eyes infuriated in thy head! Stand and brave me with thy unbearable presence! A prisoner! In irremediable misery! Given over to evil spirits, and to sentence-passing, unfeeling man! And me, in the meantime, hast thou been lulling with tasteless dissipation, concealing her growing wretchedness from me, and leaving her to perish without help.

MEPHISTOPHELES. She is not the first.

FAUST. Dog! horrible monster! Turn him, thou Infinite Spirit! turn the reptile back again into his dog's shape, in which he was often pleased to trot before me by night, to roll before the feet of the harmless wanderer, and fasten on his shoulders when he fell. Turn him again into his favorite shape, that he may crouch on his belly before me in the sand, whilst I spurn him with my foot, the reprobate! Not the first! Woe! woe! It is inconceivable by any human soul, that more than one creature can have sunk into such a depth of misery, — that the first in its writhing death-agony was not sufficient to atone for the guilt of all the rest in the sight of the Ever-pardoning. It harrows up my marrow and my very life, — the misery of this one: thou art grinning calmly at the fate of thousands.

MEPHISTOPHELES. Now are we already at our wits' end again! just where the sense of you mortals snaps with overstraining. Why dost thou enter into fellowship with us, if thou canst not go through with it? Will'st fly, and art not safe from dizziness? Did we force ourselves on thee, or thou thyself on us?

FAUST. Gnash not thy greedy teeth thus defyingly at me! I loathe thee? Great, glorious Spirit, thou who deignest to appear to me, thou who knowest my heart and my soul, why yoke me to this shame-fellow, who feeds on mischief, and battens on destruction!

MEPHISTOPHELES. Hast done?

FAUST. Save her! or woe to thee! The most horrible curse on thee for thousands of years!

MEPHISTOPHELES. I cannot loosen the shackles of the avenger, nor undo his bolts. — Save her! Who was it that plunged her into ruin? I or thou? (FAUST *looks wildly around.*) Art thou grasping after the thunder? Well, that it is not given to you wretched mortals! To dash to pieces one who replies to you in all innocence — that is just the tyrant's way of venting himself in perplexities.

FAUST. Bring me thither! She shall be free!

MEPHISTOPHELES. And the danger to which you expose yourself! Know, the guilt of blood, from your hand, still lies upon the town. Avenging spirits hover over the place of the slain, and lie in wait for the returning murderer.

FAUST. That, too, from thee? Murder and death of a world upon thee, monster! Conduct me thither, I say, and free her!

MEPHISTOPHELES. I will conduct thee, and what I can, hear! Have I all power in heaven and upon earth? I will cloud the jailer's senses; do you possess yourself of the keys, and bear her off with human hand. I will watch! The magic horses will be ready; I will bear you off. This much I can do.

FAUST. Up and away!

NIGHT.—OPEN PLAIN.

FAUST *and* MEPHISTOPHELES *rushing along upon black horses.*

FAUST. What are they working — those about the Ravenstone yonder?

MEPHISTOPHELES. Can't tell what they're cooking and making.

FAUST. Are waving upwards — waving downwards — bending — stooping.

MEPHISTOPHELES. A witch company.

FAUST. They are sprinkling and charming.

MEPHISTOPHELES. On! on!

DUNGEON.

FAUST (*with a bunch of keys and a lamp, before an iron wicket*). A tremor, long unfelt, seizes me; the concentrated misery of mankind fastens on me. Here, behind these damp walls, is her dwelling-place, and her crime was a good delusion! Thou hesitatest to go to her! Thou fearest to see her again! On! thy irresolution lingers death hitherwards. (*He takes hold of the lock. — Singing within.*)

My mother, the whore,
That killed me!
My father, the rogue,
That ate me up!
My little sister
Picked up the bones
At a cool place!
There I became a beautiful little wood-bird.
Fly away! fly away!

FAUST (*opening the lock*). She has no presentiment that her lover is listening, hears the chains clank, the straw rustle. (*He enters.*)

MARGARET (*hiding her face in the bed of straw*). Woe! woe! They come. Bitter death!

FAUST (*softly*). Hush! hush! I come to free thee.

MARGARET (*throwing herself before him*). If thou art human, feel for my wretchedness.

FAUST. You will wake the guard by your cries! (*He takes hold of the chains to unlock them.*)

MARGARET (*on her knees*). Who has given you, headsman, this power over me? You come for me whilst it is yet midnight. Be merciful and let me live. Is not to-morrow morning soon enough? (*She stands up.*) I am yet so young, so young! and am to die already! I was fair, too, and that was my undoing! My true-love was near—he is now far away. Torn lies my garland, scattered the flowers. Don't take hold of me so roughly! Spare me! What have I done to you? Let me not implore in vain! I never saw you before in all my life, you know!

FAUST. Can I endure this misery?

MARGARET. I am now entirely in thy power. Only let me first give suck to the child. I pressed it this whole night to my heart. They took it away to vex me, and now say I killed it. And I shall never be happy again. They sing

songs upon me! It is wicked of the people. An old tale ends so, — who bids them apply it?

FAUST (*throws himself on the ground*). A lover lies at thy feet, to unloose the bonds of wretchedness.

MARGARET (*throws herself by his side*). Ay, let us kneel to invoke the saints. See under these steps, under the threshold, hell is seething! The Evil One, with fearful fury, is making a din.

FAUST (*passionately*). Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET (*listening*). That was my true-love's voice. (*She springs up. The chains fall off.*) Where is he! I heard him call. I am free! Nobody shall hinder me. I will fly to his neck! lie on his bosom! He called Margaret! He stood upon the threshold. In the midst, through the howling and clattering of hell, through the grim, devilish scoffing, I knew the sweet, the loving tone again.

FAUST. 'Tis I.

MARGARET. 'Tis thou! Ah, say so once again! (*Clasping him.*) 'Tis he!' 'Tis he! Whither is all my wretchedness! Whither the agony of the dungeon! — the chains! 'Tis thou! Thou comest to save me. I am saved! — There again already is the street, where I saw thee for the first time; and the cheerful garden where I and Martha waited for thee.

FAUST (*striving to take her away*). Come! come with me!

MARGARET. Oh, stay! I like to stay where thou stayest. (*Caressing him.*)

FAUST. Haste! If you do not make haste we shall pay dearly for it.

MARGARET. What! You can no longer kiss? So short a time away from me, my love, and already forgotten how to kiss! Why do I feel so sad upon your neck? when in other times a whole heaven came over me from your words, your looks; and you kissed me as if you were going to smother me! Kiss me! or I will kiss you! (*She embraces him.*) O woe! your lips are cold, — are dumb. Where have you left your love? Who has robbed me of it? (*She turns from him.*)

FAUST. Come! follow me! take courage, my love. I will press thee to my heart with a thousandfold warmth — only follow me! I ask thee but this.

MARGARET (*turning to him*). And is it thou, then? And is it thou, indeed?

FAUST. 'Tis I. Come along.

MARGARET. You undo my fetters, you take me to your bosom again! How comes it that you are not afraid of me? And do you then know, my love, whom you are freeing?

FAUST. Come, come! the depth of night is already passing away.

MARGARET. I have killed my mother, I have drowned my child. Was it not bestowed on thee and me?—on thee, too? 'Tis thou! I scarcely believe it. Give me thy hand. It is no dream—thy dear hand!—but oh, 'tis damp! Wipe it off. It seems to me as if there was blood on it. Oh, God! what hast thou done! Put up thy sword! I pray thee, do!

FAUST. Let what is past be past. Thou wilt kill me.

MARGARET. No, you must remain behind. I will describe the graves to you! you must see to them the first thing to-morrow. Give my mother the best place;—my brother close by;—me a little on one side, only not too far off. And the little one on my right breast; no one else will lie by me. To nestle to *thy* side,—that was a sweet, a dear delight! But it will never be mine again! I fear as if I were irresistibly drawn to you, and you were thrusting me off. And yet, 'tis you; you look so good, so kind.

FAUST. If you feel that 'tis I, come along.

MARGARET. Out there?

FAUST. Into the free air!

MARGARET. If the grave is without, if death lies in wait,—then come! Hence into the eternal resting-place, and not a step further.—Thou art now going away? O Hénry, could I but go, too!

FAUST. Thou canst! Only consent! The door stands open.

MARGARET. I dare not go out; there is no hope for me! What avails it flying? They are lying in wait for me. It is so miserable to be obliged to beg,—and, what is worse, with an evil conscience, too. It is so miserable to wander in a strange land,—and they will catch me, do as I will.

FAUST. I shall be with thee.

MARGARET. Quick, quick! Save thy poor child. Away! Keep the path up by the brook—over the bridge—into the wood—to the left where the plank is—in the pond. Only quick and catch hold of it! it tries to rise! it is still struggling! Help! help!

D—Goethe

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FAUST. Be calm, I pray! Only one step, and thou art free.

MARGARET. Were we but past the hill! There sits my mother on a stone—my brain grows chill!—there sits my mother on a stone, and waves her head to and fro. She beckons not, she nods not, her head is heavy; she slept so long, she'll wake no more. She slept that we might enjoy ourselves. Those were pleasant times!

FAUST. As no prayer, no persuasion, is here of any avail, I will risk the bearing thee away.

MARGARET. Let me go! No, I endure no violence! Lay not hold of me so murderously! Time was, you know, when I did all to pleasure you.

FAUST. The day is dawning! My love! my love!

MARGARET. Day! Yes, it is growing day! The last day is breaking in! My wedding-day it was to be! Tell no one that thou hadst been with Margaret already. Woe to my garland! It is all over now! We shall meet again, but not at the dance. The crowd thickens; it is not heard. The square, the streets, cannot hold them. The bell tolls—the staff breaks! How they bind and seize me! Already am I hurried off to the blood-seat! Already quivering for every neck is the sharp steel which quivers for mine. Dumb lies the world as the grave.

FAUST. O that I had never been born!

MEPHISTOPHELES (*appears without*). Up! or you are lost. Vain hesitation! Linger and prattling! My horses shudder; the morning is gloaming up.

MARGARET. What rises up from the floor? He! He! Send him away! What would he at the holy place? He would me!

FAUST. Thou shalt live!

MARGARET. Judgment of God! I have given myself up to thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to FAUST*). Come! come! I will leave you in the scrape with her.

MARGARET. Thine am I, Father! save me, ye angels! Ye holy hosts, range yourselves round about to guard me! Henry! I tremble to look upon thee.

MEPHISTOPHELES. ~~She is judged!~~

VOICE (*from above*). ~~Is saved!~~

MEPHISTOPHELES (*to FAUST*). Hither to me! (*Disappears with FAUST*).

VOICE (*from within, dying away*). Henry! Henry!

CLAVIGO:

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

Clavigo was written in 1774, a few months before the publication of "The Sorrows of Young Werther," and a year after the appearance of Goetz von Berlichingen. It has always been popular in Germany, where it still holds a place on the stage; but it has not been translated into English before.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, oriented vertically on the right side of the page.

INTRODUCTION TO CLAVIGO.

THE story on which Clavigo is founded is not only an authentic one, but the circumstances occurred only ten years before the publication of the play. They are as follows:—Beaumarchais (the well-known French writer) had two sisters living in Madrid, one married to an architect, the other, Marie, engaged to Clavijo, a young author without fortune. No sooner had Clavijo obtained an office which he had long solicited than he refused to fulfil his promise. Beaumarchais hurried to Madrid; his object was twofold; to save the reputation of his sister, and to put a little speculation of his own on foot. He sought Clavijo, and by his *sang-froid* and courage extorted from him a written avowal of his contemptible conduct. No sooner is this settled than Clavijo, alarmed at the consequences, solicits a reconciliation with Marie, offering to marry her. Beaumarchais consents, but just as the marriage is about to take place he learns that Clavijo is secretly conspiring against him, accusing him of having extorted the marriage by force, in consequence of which he has procured an order from the government to expel Beaumarchais from Madrid. Irritated at such villainy, Beaumarchais goes to the Ministers, reaches the King, and avenges himself by getting Clavijo dismissed from his post.

This story was published by Beaumarchais under title of a "Mémoire," in the year 1774; the circumstances having occurred in 1764. Goethe once, at a friendly meeting, read the recently published Mémoire, and in the conversation that ensued promised to produce a play on the subject in the course of the following week. He fulfilled his promise, and it will be seen how closely, with the exception of the tragic *dénouement*, he adhered to the original story. The real Clavijo subsequently became a man of considerable eminence in Madrid, though Goethe could not have been aware of his existence when he wrote the play.*

* The above details are derived from Mr. G. H. Lewes' "Life of Goethe."

It belongs to the period just after the composition of *Werther*, and is one of the less important of his literary works; but the exceedingly dramatic presentation of the incidents has given it great popularity on the German stage, and helped considerably to establish the fame of the author.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CLAVIGO.

CARLOS, *his friend*.

BEAUMARCHAIS.

MARIE BEAUMARCHAIS.

SOPHIE GUILBERT (*nee* BEAUMARCHAIS).

GUILBERT, *her husband*.

BUENCO.

ST. GEORGE.

The scene is at Madrid.

CLAVIGO.

ACT I.

SCENE I. CLAVIGO'S *Dwelling.*

Enter CLAVIGO and CARLOS.

CLAVIGO (*rising up from the writing-table*). The journal will do a good work, it must charm all women. Tell me, Carlos, do you not think that my weekly periodical is now one of the first in Europe?

CARLOS. We Spaniards, at least, have no modern author who unites such great strength of thought, so much florid imagination, with so brilliant and easy a style.

CLAVIGO. Please don't. I must still be among the people the creator of the good style; people are ready to take all sorts of impressions; I have a reputation among my fellow-citizens, their confidence: and, between ourselves, my acquirements extend daily; my experience widens, and my style becomes ever truer and stronger.

CARLOS. Good, Clavigo! Yet, if you will not take it ill, your paper pleased me far better when you yet wrote it at Marie's feet, when the lovely cheerful creature had still an influence over you. I know not how, the whole had a more youthful blooming appearance.

CLAVIGO. Those were good times, Carlos, which are now gone. I gladly avow to thee, I wrote then with opener heart; and, it is true, she had a large share in the approbation which the public accorded me at the very beginning. But at length, Carlos, one becomes very soon weary of women; and were you not the first to applaud my resolution, when I determined to forsake her?

CARLOS. You would have become rusty. Women are far too monotonous. Only, it seems to me, it were again time that you cast about for a new plan, for it is all up when one is so entirely aground.

CLAVIGO. My plan is the Court; there there is no leisure nor holiday. For a stranger, who, without standing, with-

out name, without fortune, came here, have I not already advanced far enough? Here in a Court! amid the throng of men, where it is not easy to attract attention? I do so rejoice, when I look on the road I have left behind me. Loved by the first in the kingdom! Honored for my attainments, my rank! Recorder of the king! Carlos, all that spurs me on; I were nothing if I remained what I am. Forward! forward! There it costs toil and art! One needs all his wits; and the women! the women! one loses far too much time with them.

CARLOS. Simpleton, that is your fault. I can never live without women, and they are not in my way at all. Moreover, I do not say so very many fine things to them, I do not amuse myself entire months with sentiment and such like; for I do not at all like to have to do with prudish girls. One has soon said his say with them: afterwards, if you have carried on with them for a while, scarcely have they been warmed up a little, when straightway—the deuce—you are pestered with thoughts of marriage and promises of marriage, which I fear as the plague. You are pensive, Clavigo?

CLAVIGO. I cannot get rid of the recollection that I jilted, deceived Marie, call it as you will.

CARLOS. Wonderful! It seems to me, however, that one lives only once in this world, has only once this power, these prospects, and he who does not make the most of them, and rise as high as possible, is a fool. And to marry! to marry just at the time when life is for the first time about to soar aloft on widespread pinions! to bury one's self in domestic repose, to shut one's self up when one has not traversed the half of his journey—has not yet achieved the half of his conquests! To love her was natural; to promise her marriage was folly, and if you had kept your word it would have been downright madness.

CLAVIGO. Hold! I do not understand men. I loved her truly, she drew me to her, she held me, and as I sat at her feet I vowed to her—I vowed to myself—that it should ever be so, that I would be hers as soon as I had an office, a position—and now, Carlos!

CARLOS. It will be quite time enough when you are a made man, when you have reached the desired goal, if then—to crown and confirm all your happiness—you seek to ally yourself by a prudent marriage with a family of wealth and consequence.

CLAVIGO. She has vanished! quite out of my heart vanished, and if her unhappiness does not sometimes remind me — strange that one is so changeable!

CARLOS. If one were constant I should wonder. Look, pray, does not everything in the world change? Why should our passions endure? Be tranquil; she is not the first jilted girl, nor the first that has consoled herself. If I were to advise you, there is the young widow over the way —

CLAVIGO. You know I do not set much store on such proposals. A love affair which does not come of its own accord has no charm for me.

CARLOS. So dainty people!

CLAVIGO. Be it so, and forget not that our chief work at present is, to render ourselves necessary to the new minister. That Whal resigns the government of India is troublesome enough for us. In truth, otherwise it does not disquiet me; his influence abides — Grimaldi and he are friends, and we know how to talk and manœuvre.

CARLOS. And think and do what we will.

CLAVIGO. That is the grand point in the world. (*Rings for the servant.*) Take this sheet to the printing-office.

CARLOS. Are you to be seen in the evening?

CLAVIGO. I do not think so. However, you can inquire.

CARLOS. This evening I should like to undertake something which gladdened my heart; all this afternoon I must write again, there is no end of it.

CLAVIGO. Have patience. If we did not toil for so many persons we would not get the ascendancy over so many. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. GUILBERT'S *Dwelling.*

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE, and DON BUENCO.

BUENCO. You have had a bad night?

SOPHIE. I told her so yesterday evening. She was so foolishly merry and prattled till eleven, then she was overheated, could not sleep, and now again she has no breath and weeps the whole morning.

MARIE. Strange that our brother comes not! It is two days past the time.

SOPHIE. Only have patience, he will not fail us.

MARIE (*rising*). How anxious I am to see this brother, my avenger and my saviour. I scarcely remember him.

SOPHIE. Indeed! Oh, I can well picture him to myself; he was a fiery, open, brave boy of thirteen when our father sent us here.

MARIE. A noble great soul. You have read the letter which he wrote when he learnt my unhappiness; each character of it is enshrined in my heart. "If you are guilty," writes he, "expect no forgiveness; over and above your misery the contempt of a brother will fall heavy upon you, and the curse of a father. If you are innocent, oh, then, all vengeance, all, all glowing vengeance on the traitor!"—I tremble! He will come. I tremble, not for myself, I stand before God in my innocence! You must, my friends—I know not what I want! O Clavigo!

SOPHIE. You will not listen! You will kill yourself.

MARIE. I will be still. Yes, I will not weep. It seems to me, however, I could have no more tears. And why tears? I am only sorry that I make my life bitter to you. For when all is said and done, what have I to complain of? I have had much joy as long as our old friend still lived. Clavigo's love has caused me much joy, perhaps more than mine for him. And now what is it after all? of what importance am I? What matters it if a girl's heart is broken? What matters it whether she pines away and torments her poor young heart?

BUENCO. For God's sake, Mademoiselle!

MARIE. Whether it is all one to *him*—that he loves me no more? Ah! why am I not more amiable? But *he* should pity, at least pity me!—that the hapless girl, to whom he had made himself so needful, now without him should pine and weep her life away—Pity! I wish not to be pitied by this man.

SOPHIE. If I could teach you to despise him—the worthless, detestable man.

MARIE. No, sister, worthless he is not; and must I then despise him whom I hate? Hate! Indeed, sometimes I can hate him—sometimes, when the Spanish spirit possesses me. Lately, oh! lately, when we met him, his look wrought full, warm love in me! And as I again came home, and his manner recurred to me, and the calm, cold glance that he cast over me, while beside the brilliant donna; then I became a Spaniard in my heart, and seized my dagger and poison, and disguised myself. Are you amazed, Buenco? All in thought only, of course!

SOPHIE. Foolish girl!

MARIE. My imagination led me after him. I saw him as he lavished all the tenderness, all the gentleness at the feet of his new love—the charms with which he poisoned me—I aimed at the heart of the traitor! Ah! Buenco!—all at once the good-hearted French girl was again there, who knows of no love-sickness, and no daggers for revenge. We are badly off! Vaudevilles to entertain our lovers, fans to punish them, and, if they are faithless?—Say, sister, what do they do in France when lovers are faithless?

SOPHIE. They curse them.

MARIE. And——

SOPHIE. And let them go their ways.

MARIE. Go!—and why shall not I let Clavigo go? If that is the French fashion, why shall it not be so in Spain? Why shall a Frenchwoman not be a Frenchwoman in Spain? We will let him go, and take to ourselves another; it appears to me they do so with us, too.

BUENCO. He has broken a sacred promise, and no light love-affair, no friendly attachment. Mademoiselle, you are pained, hurt even to the depths of your heart. Oh! never was my position of an unknown, peaceful citizen of Madrid so burdensome, so painful as at this moment, in which I feel myself so feeble, so powerless to obtain justice for you against the treacherous courtier!

MARIE. When he was still Clavigo, not yet Recorder of the King; when he was still the stranger, the guest, the new-comer in our house, how amiable he was, how good! How all his ambition, all his desire to rise, seemed to be a child of his love! For me he struggled for name, rank, fortune; he has all now, and I!——

GUILBERT comes.

GUILBERT (*privately to his wife*). Our brother is coming?

MARIE. My brother! (*She trembles; they conduct her to a seat*). Where? where? Bring him to me! Take me to him!

BEAUMARCHAIS comes.

BEAUMARCHAIS. My sister! (*Quitting the eldest to rush towards the youngest*). My sister! My friends! O my sister!

MARIE. Is it you, indeed? God be thanked it is you!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Let me regain composure.

MARIE. My heart!—my poor heart!

SOPHIE. Be calm. Dear brother, I hoped to see you more tranquil.

BEAUMARCHAIS. More tranquil! Are you, then, tranquil? Do I not behold in the wasted figure of this dear one, in your tearful eyes, your sorrowful paleness, in the dead silence of your friends, that you are as wretched as I have imagined you to be during all the long way? and more wretched; for I see you, I hold you in my arms; your presence redoubles my sufferings. O my sister!

SOPHIE. And our father?

BEAUMARCHAIS. He blesses you, and me, if I save you.

BUENCO. Sir, permit one unknown who, at the first look, recognizes in you a noble, brave man, to bear witness to the deep interest which all this matter inspires in me. Sir, you undertake this long journey to save, to avenge your sister! Welcome! be welcome as a guardian angel, though, at the same time, you put us all to the blush!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I hoped, sir, to find in Spain such hearts as yours; that encouraged me to take this step. Nowhere, nowhere in the world are feeling, congenial souls wanting, if only one steps forward whose circumstances leave him full freedom to carry his courage through. And oh, my friends, I feel full of hope! Everywhere there are men of honor among the powerful and great, and the ear of Majesty is rarely deaf; only our voice is almost always too weak to reach to their height.

SOPHIE. Come, sister! come, rest a moment. She is quite beside herself.

(*They lead her away.*)

MARIE. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. God willing if you are innocent, then all, all vengeance on the traitor! (*Exeunt MARIE and SOPHIE.*) My brother!—my friends!—I see it in your looks that you are so. Let me regain composure and then!—a pure impartial recital of the whole story. This must determine my actions. The feeling of a good cause shall confirm my courage; and, believe me, if we are right, we shall get justice.

ACT II.

SCENE I. CLAVIGO'S *House.*

CLAVIGO. Who may these Frenchmen be, that have got themselves announced in my house? Frenchmen! In former days this nation was welcome to me! And why not now? It is singular that a man who sets so much at naught is yet bound with feeble thread to a single point. It is too much! And did I owe more to Marie than to myself? and is it a duty to make myself unhappy because a girl loves me?

A SERVANT.

SERVANT. The foreign gentlemen, sir.

CLAVIGO. Bid them enter. Pray, did you tell their servant that I expect them to breakfast?

SERVANT. As you ordered.

CLAVIGO. I shall be back presently. [*Exit.*

BEAUMARCHAIS — ST. GEORGE.

The SERVANT places chairs for them and withdraws.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I feel so much at ease; so content, my friend, to be at length here, to hold him; he shall not escape me. Be calm: at least show him a calm exterior. My sister! my sister! who could believe that you are as innocent as you are unhappy? It shall come to light; you shall be terribly avenged! And Thou, good God! preserve to me the tranquillity of soul which Thou accordedst to me at this moment, that, amid this frightful grief, I may act as prudently as possible and with all moderation.

ST. GEORGE. Yes; this wisdom — all the prudence, my friend, you have ever shown — I claim now. Promise me once more, dear friend, that you will reflect where you are. In a strange kingdom, where all your protectors, all your money cannot secure you from the secret machinations of worthless foes.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Be tranquil: play your part well; he shall not know with which of us he has to do. I will torture him! Oh, I am just in a fine humor to roast this fellow over a slow fire!

CLAVIGO *returns.*

CLAVIGO. Gentlemen, it gives me joy to see in my house men of a nation that I have always esteemed.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir, I wish that we, too, may be worthy of the honor which you are good enough to confer on our fellow-countrymen.

ST. GEORGE. The pleasure of making your acquaintance has surmounted the fear of being troublesome to you.

CLAVIGO. Persons, whom the first look recommends, should not push modesty so far.

BEAUMARCHAIS. In truth it cannot be a novelty to you to be sought out by strangers; for by the excellence of your writings, you have made yourself as much known in foreign lands as the important offices which his majesty has entrusted to you distinguish you in your fatherland.

CLAVIGO. The king looks with much favor on my humble services, and the public with much indulgence on the trifling essays of my pen; I have wished that I could contribute in some measure to the improvement of taste, to the propagation of the sciences in my country; for they only unite us with other nations, they only make friends of the most distant spirits, and maintain the sweetest union among those even, who, alas! are too often disunited through political interests.

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is captivating to hear a man so speak who has equal influence in the state and in letters. I must also avow you have taken the word out of my mouth and brought me straight to the purpose, on account of which you see me here. A society of learned, worthy men has commissioned me, in every place through which I travel and find opportunity, to establish a correspondence between them and the best minds in the kingdom. As no Spaniard writes better than the author of the journal called the *Thinker* — a man with whom I have the honor to speak (CLAVIGO *makes a polite bow*), and who is an especial ornament of learned men, since he has known how to unite with his literary talents so great a capacity for political affairs, he cannot fail to climb the highest steps of which his character and acquirements render him worthy. I believe I can perform no more acceptable service to my friends than to put them in connection with a man of such merit.

CLAVIGO. No proposal in the world could be more agreeable to me, gentlemen; I thereby see fulfilled the sweetest hopes, with which my heart was often occupied without any prospect of their happy accomplishment. Not that I believe I shall be able, through my correspondence,

to satisfy the wishes of your learned friends; my vanity does not go so far. But as I have the happiness to be in accordance with the best minds in Spain, as nothing can remain unknown to me which is achieved in our vast kingdom by isolated, often obscure, individuals for the Arts and Sciences, I have looked upon myself, till now, as a kind of colporteur, who possesses the feeble merit of rendering the inventions of others generally useful; but now I become, through your intervention, a merchant, happy enough through the exportation of native products to extend the renown of his fatherland and thereby to enrich it with foreign treasures. So then, allow me, sir, to treat as not a stranger a man who, with such frankness, brings such agreeable news; allow me to ask what business—what project made you undertake this long journey? It is not that I would, through this officiousness, gratify vain curiosity; no, believe rather that it is with the purest intention of exerting in your behalf all the resources, all the influence which I may perchance possess; for I tell you beforehand, you have come to a place where countless difficulties encounter a stranger in the prosecution of his business, especially at the Court.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I accept so obliging an offer with warmest thanks. I have no secrets with you, sir, nor will this friend be in the way during my statement; he is sufficiently acquainted with what I have to say. (CLAVIGO looks at ST. GEORGE with attention.) A French merchant, with a large family and a limited fortune, had many business friends in Spain. One of the richest came to Paris fifteen years ago, and made him this proposal: "Give me two of your daughters, and I shall take them with me to Madrid and provide for them. I am not married, am getting old and have no relatives; they will form the happiness of my declining years, and after my decease I shall leave them one of the most considerable establishments in Spain. The eldest and one of the younger sisters were confided to his care. The father undertook to supply the house with all kinds of French merchandise which might be required, and so all went well till the friend died without the least mention of the Frenchwomen in his will, who then saw themselves in the embarrassing position of superintending alone a new business. The eldest had meanwhile married, and notwithstanding their moderate fortune, they secured through their good conduct and varied accomplishments a

multitude of friends who were eager to extend their credit and business. (CLAVIGO *becomes more and more attentive.*) About the same time a young man, a native of the Canary Islands, had got himself introduced into the family. (CLAVIGO's *countenance loses all cheerfulness, and his seriousness changes gradually into embarrassment, more and more visible.*) Despite his humble standing and fortune they receive him kindly. The Frenchwomen, remarking in him a great love of the French language, favored him with every means of making rapid progress in its study. Extremely anxious to make himself known, he forms the design of giving to the city of Madrid the pleasure, hitherto unknown to Spain, of reading a weekly periodical in the style of the English *Spectator*. His lady friends fail not to aid him in every way; they do not doubt that such an undertaking would meet with great success; in short, animated by the hope of soon becoming a man of some consequence, he ventures to make an offer of marriage to the younger. Hopes are held out to him. "Try to make your fortune," quoth the elder, "and if an appointment, the favor of the Court, or any other means of subsistence shall have given you a right to think of my sister, if she still prefers you to other suitors, I cannot refuse you my consent." (CLAVIGO, *covered with confusion, moves uneasily on his seat.*) The younger declines several advantageous offers; her fondness for the man increases, and helps her to bear the anxiety of an uncertain expectation; she interests herself for his happiness as for her own, and encourages him to issue the first number of his periodical, which appears under an imposing title. (CLAVIGO *is terribly embarrassed.* BEAUMARCHAIS, *icy cold.*) The success of the journal was astonishing; the King even, delighted with this charming production, gave the author public tokens of his favor. He was promised the first honorable office that might be vacant. From that moment he removed all rivals from his beloved, while quite openly striving hard to win her good graces. The marriage was delayed only in expectation of the promised situation. At last, after six years' patient waiting, unbroken friendship, aid, and love on the part of the girl; after six years' devotion, gratitude, attentions, solemn assurances on the part of the man, the office is forthcoming — and he vanishes. (CLAVIGO *utters a deep sigh, which he tries to stifle, and is quite overcome.*) The matter had made so great a noise in the world that the issue could not be regarded with indiffer-

ence. A house had been rented for two families. The whole town was talking of it. The hearts of all friends were wrung and sought revenge. Application was made to powerful protectors; but the worthless fellow, already initiated in the cabals of the Court, knew how to render fruitless all their efforts, and went so far in his insolence as to dare to threaten the unhappy ladies; to dare to say, in the very face of those friends who had gone to find him, that the Frenchwomen should take care; he defied them to injure him, and if they made bold to undertake aught against him, it would be easy for him to ruin them in a foreign land, where they would be without protection and help. At this intelligence the poor girl fell into convulsions, which threatened death. In the depth of her grief, the elder wrote to France about the public outrage which had been done to them. The news most powerfully moves her brother; he demands leave of absence to obtain counsel and aid in so complicated an affair, he flies from Paris to Madrid, and the brother—it is I! who have left all—my country, duties, family, standing, pleasures, in order to avenge, in Spain, an innocent, unhappy sister. I come, armed with the best cause and firm determination to unmask a traitor, to mark with bloody strokes his soul on his face, and the traitor—art thou!

CLAVIGO. Hear me, sir—I am—I have—I doubt not——

BEAUMARCHAIS. Interrupt me not. You have nothing to say to me and much to hear from me. Now, to make a beginning, have the goodness, in the presence of this gentleman, who has come from France expressly with me, to declare whether my sister has deserved this public outrage from you through any treachery, levity, weakness, rudeness, or any other blemish.

CLAVIGO. No, sir. Your sister, Donna Maria, is a lady overflowing with wit, amiability, and goodness.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Has she ever during your acquaintance given you any occasion to complain of her or to esteem her less?

CLAVIGO. Never! never!

BEAUMARCHAIS (*rising*). And why, monster, had you the barbarity to torture the girl to death? Only because her heart preferred you to ten others, all more honorable and richer than you?

CLAVIGO. Ah, sir! If you knew how I have been instigated; how I, through manifold advisers and circumstances——

BEAUMARCHAIS. Enough! (*To ST. GEORGE.*) You have heard the vindication of my sister; go and publish it. What I have further to say to the gentleman, needs no witnesses. (*CLAVIGO rises. ST. GEORGE retires.*) Stay! Stay! (*Both sit down again.*) Having now got so far, I shall make a proposal to you, which I hope you will accept. It is equally agreeable to you and to me that you do not wed Marie, and you are deeply sensible that I have not come to play the part of a theatrical brother, who will unravel the drama, and present a husband to his sister. You have cast a slur upon an honorable lady in cold blood because you supposed that in a foreign land she was without prop and avenger. Thus acts a base, worthless fellow. And so, first of all, testify with your own hand, spontaneously, with open doors, in presence of your servants, that you are an abominable man, who have deceived, betrayed my sister without the least cause; and with this declaration I will set out for Aranjuez, where our ambassador resides; I will show it, get it printed, and the day after to-morrow the court and the town shall be flooded with it. I have powerful friends here, I have time and money, and of all shall I avail myself to pursue you in the most furious manner possible till the resentment of my sister is appeased and satisfied, and she herself says, "Stop."

CLAVIGO. I will not make such a declaration.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I believe you, for in your place I should, perhaps, not make it either. But here is the reverse of the medal. If you do not write it I shall remain beside you, from this moment I shall not quit you. I shall follow you everywhere, till you, disgusted with such society, will have sought to get rid of me behind Buenretiro. If I am more fortunate than you, without seeing the ambassador, without speaking here with any one, I take my dying sister in my arms, place her in my carriage, and return to France with her. Should fate favor you, I am played out, and you may have a laugh at our expense. Meanwhile, breakfast. (*BEAUMARCHAIS rings the bell. An ATTENDANT brings the chocolate. BEAUMARCHAIS takes a cup, and walks in the adjoining gallery, examining the pictures.*)

CLAVIGO. Air! air! I have been surprised and seized like a boy. Where are you then, Clavigo? How will you end this? How can you end it? Frightful position, into which your folly, your treachery has plunged you? (*He seizes his sword on the table.*) Ha! short and good! (*Lays it down.*) And is there no way, no means, but death?—or

murder?—horrible murder! To deprive the hapless lady of her last solace, her only stay, her brother! To see gushing out the blood of a noble, brave man! And to draw upon yourself the double, insupportable curse of a ruined family! O, this was not the prospect when this amiable creature, even from your first meeting, attracted you with so many winsome ways! And when you abandoned her, did you not see the frightful consequences of your crime? What blessedness awaited you in her arms! in the friendship of such a brother! Marie! Marie! O that you could forgive! that at your feet I could atone for all by my tears!—And why not?—My heart overflows; my soul mounts up in hope! Sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. What is your determination?

CLAVIGO. Hear me! My deceit towards your sister is unpardonable. Vanity has misled me. I feared by this marriage to ruin all my plans, all my projects for a world-wide celebrity. Could I have known that she had such a brother she would have been in my eyes no unimportant stranger; I should have expected from our union very considerable advantages. You inspire me, sir, with the highest esteem, and, in making me so keenly sensible of my errors, you impart to me a desire, a power, to make all good again. I throw myself at your feet! Help! help, if it is possible, to efface my guilt and put an end to unhappiness. Give your sister to me, again, sir, give me to her! How happy were I to receive from your hand a wife and the forgiveness of all my faults!

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is too late! My sister loves you no more, and I detest you. Write the desired declaration, that is all that I exact from you, and leave me to provide for a choice revenge.

CLAVIGO. Your obstinacy is neither right nor prudent. I grant you that it does not depend on me, whether I will make good again so irremediable an evil. Whether I can make it good? That rests with the heart of your excellent sister, whether she may again look upon a wretch who does not deserve to see the light of day. Only it is your duty to ascertain that and to conduct yourself accordingly, if your demeanor is not to resemble the inconsiderate passion of a young man. If Donna Maria is immovable. O, I know her heart! O, her good, heavenly soul hovers before me quite vividly! If she is inexorable, then it is time, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I insist on the vindication.

CLAVIGO (*approaching the table*). And if I seize the sword?

BEAUMARCHAIS (*advancing*). Good, sir! Excellent, sir!

CLAVIGO (*holding him back*). One word more! You have the better case; let me have prudence for you. Consider what you are doing. Whether you or I fall, we are irrecoverably lost. Should I not die of pain, of remorse, if your blood were to stain my sword, if I, to complete her wretchedness, bereft her of her brother; and on the other hand — the murderer of Clavigo would not re-cross the Pyrenees.

BEAUMARCHAIS. The vindication, sir, the vindication!

CLAVIGO. Well! be it so. I will do all to convince you of the upright feeling with which your presence inspires me. I will write the vindication, I will write it at your dictation. Only promise me not to make use of it till I am able to convince Donna Maria of the change and repentance of my heart, till I have spoken to her elder sister; till she has put in a good word for me with my beloved one. Not before, sir.

BEAUMARCHAIS. I am going to Aranjuez.

CLAVIGO. Well, then, till your return, let the vindication remain in your portfolio; if I have not been forgiven, then let your vengeance have full swing. This proposal is just, fair, and prudent; and if you do not agree to it let us then play the game of life and death. And whichever of us two become the victim of his own rashness, you and your poor sister will suffer in any case.

BEAUMARCHAIS. It becomes you to pity those you have made wretched.

CLAVIGO (*sitting down*). Are you satisfied?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Well, then, I yield the point. But not a moment longer. I shall come back from Aranjuez, shall ask, shall hear! And if they have not forgiven you, which is what I hope and desire, I am off directly with the paper to the printing-office.

CLAVIGO (*sitting down*). How do you demand it?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir! in presence of your attendants.

CLAVIGO. Why?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Command only that they be present in the adjoining gallery. It shall not be said that I have constrained you.

CLAVIGO. What scruples!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I am in Spain and have to deal with you.

CLAVIGO. Now then! (*Rings. A SERVANT.*) Call my attendants together, and betake yourselves to the gallery

there. (*The SERVANT retires. The rest come and occupy the gallery.*) You allow me to write the vindication?

BEAUMARCHAIS. No, sir! Write it, I must beg of you, write it as I dictate it to you. (*CLAVIGO writes.*) "I, the undersigned, Joseph Clavigo, Recorder of the King" —

CLAVIGO. "Of the King."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "Acknowledge that after I was received into the family of Madame Guilbert as a friend" —

CLAVIGO. "As a friend."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "I made her sister, Mademoiselle de Beaumarchais, a promise of marriage, repeated many times, which I have unscrupulously broken." Have you got it down?

CLAVIGO. But, sir!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Have you another expression for it?

CLAVIGO. I should think —

BEAUMARCHAIS. "Unscrupulously broken." What you have done you need not hesitate to write. — "I have abandoned her, without any fault or weakness on her part having suggested a pretext or an excuse for this perfidy."

CLAVIGO. Well!

BEAUMARCHAIS. "On the contrary, the demeanor of the lady has been always pure, blameless, and worthy of all honor."

CLAVIGO. — "Worthy of all honor."

BEAUMARCHAIS. "I confess that, through my deceit, the levity of my conversations, the construction of which they were susceptible, I have publicly humiliated this virtuous lady; and on this account I entreat her forgiveness, although I do not regard myself as worthy of receiving it." (*CLAVIGO stops.*) Write! write! "And this testimony of my own free will, and unforced, I have given, with this especial promise, that if this satisfaction should not please the injured lady, I am ready to afford it in every other way required. Madrid."

CLAVIGO (*rises, beckons to the servants to withdraw, and hands him the paper*). I have to do with an injured, but a noble man. You will keep your word, and put off your vengeance. Only on this consideration, in this hope, I have granted you the shameful document, to which nothing else would have reduced me. But before I venture to appear before Donna Maria, I have resolved to engage some one to put in a word for me, to speak in my behalf — and you are the man.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do not reckon on that.

CLAVIGO. At least make her aware of the bitter heart-felt repentance which you have seen in me. That is all, all, that I beg of you; do not deny me this; I should have to choose another less powerful intercessor, and even you owe her anyhow a faithful account. Do tell her how you have found me!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Well! this I can do, this I shall do. Good-bye, then.

CLAVIGO. Farewell! (*He wishes to take his hand; BEAUMARCHAIS draws it back.*)

CLAVIGO (*alone*). So unexpectedly from one position into the other. It is an infatuation, a dream! — I should not have given this vindication. — It came so quickly, so suddenly, like a thunder-storm!

CARLOS *enters*.

CARLOS. What visit is this you have had? The whole house is astir. What is the matter?

CLAVIGO. Marie's brother.

CARLOS. I suspected it. This old dog of a servant, who was formerly with Guilbert, and who at present acts the spy for me, knew yesterday that he was expected, and found me only this moment. He was here then?

CLAVIGO. An excellent young man.

CARLOS. Of whom we shall soon be rid. Already I have spread nets on his way! — What, then, was the matter? A challenge? An apology? Was he very hot, the fellow?

CLAVIGO. He demanded a declaration, that his sister gave me no occasion for the change in my feelings towards her.

CARLOS. And have you granted it?

CLAVIGO. I thought it was best.

CARLOS. Well, very well! Was that all?

CLAVIGO. He insisted on a duel or the vindication.

CARLOS. The latter was the more judicious. Who will risk his life for a boy so romantic? And did he exact the paper with violence?

CLAVIGO. He dictated it to me, and I had to call the servants into the gallery.

CARLOS. I understand! ah! now I have you, little master! That will prove his ruin. Call me a scrivener if in two days I have not the varlet in prison and off for India by the next transport.

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos. The matter stands otherwise than as you think.

CARLOS. What?

CLAVIGO. I hope through his intervention, through my earnest endeavors, to obtain forgiveness from the unhappy girl.

CARLOS. Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. I hope to efface all the past, to heal the breach, and so in my own eyes and in the eyes of the world again to become an honorable man.

CARLOS. The devil! Have you become childish? One can still detect the bookworm in you. — To let yourself be so befooled! Do you not see that that is a stupidly laid plan to entrap you?

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos, he does not wish marriage; they are even opposed to it; she will not listen to aught from me.

CARLOS. That is the very point. No, my good friend, take it not ill; I may, perhaps, in plays have seen a country squire thus cheated.

CLAVIGO. You pain me. I beg you will reserve your humor for my wedding. I have resolved to marry Marie, of my own accord, from the impulse of my heart. All my hope, all my felicity, rests on the thought of procuring her forgiveness. And then away, Pride! Heaven still lies, as before, in the breast of this loved one. All the fame which I acquire, all the greatness to which I rise, will fill me with double joy, for it is shared by the lady who makes me twice a man. Farewell! I must hence. I must at least speak with Guilbert.

CARLOS. Wait only till after dinner.

CLAVIGO. Not a moment.

[*Exit.*

CARLOS (*looking after him in silence for some time*). There, some one is going to burn his fingers again!

ACT III.

SCENE I. GUILBERT'S *abode*.

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE, BEAUMARCHAIS.

MARIE. You have seen him? All my limbs tremble! You have seen him? I had almost fainted when I heard he was come; and you have seen him? No, I can — I will — no — I can never see him again.

SOPHIE. I was beside myself when he stepped in. For ah! did not I love him as you did, with the fullest, purest, most sisterly love? Has not his estrangement grieved, tortured me? And now, the returning, the repentent one, at my feet! Sister, there is something so charming in his look, in the tone of his voice. He ——

MARIE. Never, never more!

SOPHIE. He is the same as ever; has still that good, soft, feeling heart; still even that impetuosity of passion. There is still even the desire to be loved, and the excruciatingly painful torture when love is denied him. All! all! and of thee he speaks, Marie! as in those happy days of the most ardent passion. It is, as if your good genius had even brought about this interval of infidelity and separation to break the uniformity and tediousness of a prolonged attachment, and impart to the feeling a fresh vivacity.

MARIE. Do you speak a word for him?

SOPHIE. No, sister. Nor have I promised to do so. Only, dearest, I see things as they are. You and your brother see them in a light far too romantic. You have this experience in common with many a very good girl, that your lover became faithless and forsook you. And that he comes again penitent, will amend his fault, revive all old hopes—that is a happiness which another would not lightly reject.

MARIE. My heart would break!

SOPHIE. I believe you. The first moment must make a sensible impression on you — and then, my dear, I beseech you, regard not this anxiety, this embarrassment, which seems to overpower all your senses, as a result of hatred and ill-will. Your heart speaks more for him than you suppose, and even on that account you do not trust yourself to see him, because you so anxiously desire his return.

MARIE. Spare me, dearest!

SOPHIE. You should be happy. Did I feel that you despise him, that he is indifferent to you, I would not say another word, he should see my face no more. Yet, as it is, my love, you will thank me that I have helped you to overcome this painful irresolution, which is a token of the deepest love.

GUILBERT, BUENCO.

SOPHIE. Come, Buenco! Guilbert, come! Help me to give this darling courage, resolution, now while we may.

BUENCO. Would that I dared say — receive him again.

SOPHIE. Buenco!

BUENCO. The thought makes my blood boil — that he should still possess this angel, whom he has so shamefully injured, whom he has dragged to the grave. He — possess her? Why? How does he repair all that he has violated? He returns; once more it pleases him to return and say: “Now I may; now I will,” just as if this excellent creature were suspected wares, which in the end you toss to the buyer after he has tormented you to the marrow by the meanest offers, and haggling like a Jew. No, my voice he will never obtain, not even if the heart of Marie herself should speak for him. To return; and why, then, now? — now? — Must he wait till a valiant brother come, whose vengeance he must fear, and, like a schoolboy, come and crave pardon? Ha! he is as cowardly as he is worthless.

GUILBERT. You speak like a Spaniard, and as if you did not know Spaniards. This moment we are in greater danger than any of you perceive.

MARIE. Good Guilbert!

GUILBERT. I honor our brother’s bold soul. In silence I have observed his heroic conduct. That all may turn out well, I wish that Marie could resolve to give Clavigo her hand; for — (*smiling*) — her heart he has still.

MARIE. You are cruel.

SOPHIE. Listen to him, I beseech you, listen to him!

GUILBERT. Your brother has wrung from him a declaration which will vindicate you in the eyes of the world and ruin us.

BUENCO. What?

MARIE. O God!

GUILBERT. He gave it in the hope of touching your heart. If you remain unmoved, then he must with might and main destroy the paper. This he can do; this he will do. Your brother will print and publish it immediately after his return from Aranjuez. I fear, if you persist, he will not return.

SOPHIE. My dear Guilbert!

MARIE. It is killing me!

GUILBERT. Clavigo cannot let the paper be published. If you reject his offer and he is a man of honor he goes to meet your brother, and one of them falls; and whether your brother perish or triumph he is lost. A stranger in Spain! The murderer of this beloved courtier! My sister, it is all

very well to think and feel nobly, but to ruin yourself and yours ——

MARIE. Advise me, Sophie; help me!

GUILBERT. And Buenco, contradict me, if you can.

BUENCO. He dares not; he fears for his life; otherwise he would not have written at all; he would not have offered Marie his hand.

GUILBERT. So much the worse. He will get a hundred to lend him their arm; a hundred to take away our brother's life on the way. Ha! Buenco, are you then so young? Should not a courtier have assassins in his pay?

BUENCO. The king is great and good.

GUILBERT. Go, then, traverse the walls which surround him, the guards, the ceremonial, and all that his courtiers have put between his people and him; press through and save us. Who comes?

CLAVIGO *appears.*

CLAVIGO. I must! I must! (MARIE utters a shriek, and falls into SOPHIE's arms.)

SOPHIE. Cruel man, in what a position you place us! (GUILBERT and BUENCO draw near to her.)

CLAVIGO. Yes, it is she! it is she! and I am Clavigo! Listen to me, gentle Marie, if you will not look on me. At the time that Guilbert received me as a friend into his house, when I was a poor unknown youth, and when in my heart I felt for you an overpowering passion, was that any merit in me? or was it not rather an inner harmony of characters, a secret union of soul, so that you neither could remain unmoved by me, and I could flatter myself with the sole possession of this heart? And now — am I not even the same? Are you not even the same? Why should I not venture to hope? Why not entreat? Would you not once more take to your bosom a friend, a lover, whom you had long believed lost, if after a perilous, hapless voyage he returned unexpectedly and laid his preserved life at your feet? And have I not also tossed upon a raging sea? Are not our passions, with which we live in perpetual strife, more terrible and indomitable than those waves which drive the unfortunate far from his fatherland? Marie! Marie! How can you hate me when I have never ceased to love you? Amid all infatuation, and in the very lap of all the enchanting seductions of vanity and pride, I have ever remembered those happy days of liberty, which I spent at

your feet in sweet retirement, as we saw lie before us a succession of blooming prospects. And now why would you not realize with me all that we hoped? Will you now not enjoy the happiness of life because a gloomy interval has deferred our hopes? No, my love, believe that the best friends in the world are not quite pure; the highest joy is also interrupted through our passions, through fate. Shall we complain that it has happened to us as to all others, and shall we chastise ourselves in casting away this opportunity of repairing the past, of consoling a ruined family, of rewarding the heroic deed of a noble brother, and of establishing our own happiness forever? My friends! from whom I deserve nothing; my friends, who must be so, because they are the friends of virtue, to which I return, unite your entreaties with mine, Marie! (*He falls on his knees.*) Marie! Do you no longer recognize my voice? Do you no more feel the pulse of my heart? Is it so? Marie! Marie!

MARIE. O Clavigo!

CLAVIGO (*leaps up and kisses her hand with transport*). She forgives me! She loves me! (*He embraces GUILBERT and BUENCO.*) She loves me still! O Marie, my heart told me so! I might have thrown myself at your feet silently, uttered with tears my anguish, my penitence; without words you would have understood me, as I without words receive my forgiveness. No, this intimate union of our souls is not destroyed; no, still they understand each other as in the olden time, in which no sound, no sign was needful to impart our deepest emotions. Marie! Marie! Marie!

BEAUMARCHAIS *advances.*

BEAUMARCHAIS. Ha!

CLAVIGO (*rushing towards him*). My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do you forgive him?

MARIE. No more, no more! my senses abandon me. (*They lead her away.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. Has she forgiven him?

BUENCO. It seems so.

BEAUMARCHAIS. You do not deserve your happiness.

CLAVIGO. I feel it, believe me.

SOPHIE (*returns*). She forgives him. A stream of tears broke from her eyes. Let him withdraw, said she, sobbing, till I recover! I forgive him.—“Ah, my sister!” she exclaimed, and fell upon my neck, “whereby knows he that I love him so?”

CLAVIGO (*kissing her hand*). I am the happiest man under the sun. My brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS (*embraces him*). With all my heart then. Although I must tell you: even yet I cannot be your friend, even yet I cannot love you. So now you are one of us, and let all be forgotten. The paper you gave me—here it is. (*He takes it from his portfolio, tears it, and gives it to him.*)

CLAVIGO. I am yours, ever yours.

SOPHIE. I beseech you to retire, that she may not hear your voice, that she may rest.

CLAVIGO (*embracing them in turn*). Farewell! Farewell! A thousand kisses to the angel. [*Exit.*]

BEAUMARCHAIS. After all, it may be for the best, although I should have preferred it otherwise (*smiling*). A girl is a good-natured creature, I must say—and, my friends, I should tell you, too, it was truly the thought, the wish of our ambassador, that Marie should forgive him, and that a happy marriage might end this vexatious business.

GUILBERT. I, too, am taking heart again.

BUENCO. He is your brother-in-law, and so, good-bye! You shall see me in your house no more.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sir!

GUILBERT. Buenco!

BUENCO. I hate him, and shall hate him till the day of judgment. And look out with what kind of a man you have to deal. [*Exit.*]

GUILBERT. He is a melancholy bird of ill-omen. But yet in time he will be persuaded, when he sees that all goes well.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Yet it was hasty to return him the paper.

GUILBERT. No more! no more! no visionary cares. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I. CLAVIGO'S abode. CARLOS, *alone*.

CARLOS. It is praiseworthy to place under guardianship a man, who, by his dissipation or other follies, shows that his reason is deranged. If the magistrate does that, who

otherwise does not much concern himself about us, why should not we do it for a friend? Clavigo, you are in a bad position; but there is still hope. And, provided that you retain a little of your former docility, there is time yet to keep you from a folly which, with your lively and sensitive character, will cause the misery of your life and lead you to an untimely grave. He comes.

CLAVIGO (*thoughtful*). Good day, Carlos.

CARLOS. A very sad, dull . . . Good day! Is that the mood in which you come from your bride?

CLAVIGO. She is an angel! They are excellent people!

CARLOS. You will not so hasten with the wedding that we cannot get an embroidered dress for the occasion?

CLAVIGO. Jest or earnest, at our wedding no embroidered dresses will make a parade.

CARLOS. I believe it, indeed.

CLAVIGO. Pleasure in each other's society, friendly harmony, shall constitute the splendor of this festival.

CARLOS. You will have a quiet little wedding.

CLAVIGO. As those who feel that their happiness rests entirely with themselves.

CARLOS. In those circumstances it is very proper.

CLAVIGO. Circumstances! What do you mean by "those circumstances?"

CARLOS. As the matter now stands and remains.

CLAVIGO. Listen, Carlos, I cannot bear a tone of reserve between friends. I know you are not in favor of this marriage; notwithstanding, if you have aught to say against it, you may say it; come, out with it. How then does the matter stand? how goes it?

CARLOS. More things, unexpected, astonishing, happen to one in life, and it were not well if all went smoothly. Society would have nothing to wonder at, nothing to whisper in the ear, nothing to pull to pieces.

CLAVIGO. It will make some stir.

CARLOS. Clavigo's wedding! that is a matter of course. How many a girl in Madrid waits for thee to make her an offer, and if you now play them this trick?

CLAVIGO. That cannot be helped now.

CARLOS. 'Tis strange, I have known few men who make so great and general an impression on women as you. In all ranks there are good girls who occupy their time with plans and projects to become yours. One relies on her beauty, another on her riches, another on her rank,

another on her wit, and another on her connections. What compliments have been paid to me on your account! For, indeed, neither my flat nose, nor crisp hair, nor my known contempt for women can bring me such good luck.

CLAVIGO. You mock.

CARLOS. As if I have not already had in my hands declarations, offers, written with their own white fond little fingers, as badly spelt as an original love-letter of a girl can only be! How many pretty duennas have come under my thumb on this account!

CLAVIGO. And you did not say a word of all this?

CARLOS. I did not wish to trouble you with mere trifles, and I could not have advised you to take any matter seriously. O Clavigo, my heart has watched over your fate as over my own! I have no other friend but you; all men are not to be tolerated and you even begin to be unbearable.

CLAVIGO. I entreat you, be calm.

CARLOS. Burn the house of a man who has taken ten years to build it, and then send him a confessor to recommend Christian patience! A man ought to look out for no one but himself; people do not deserve——

CLAVIGO. Are your misanthropic visions returning?

CARLOS. If I harp anew on that string who is to blame but you? I said to myself: What would avail him at present the most advantageous marriage? him, who for an ordinary man has doubtless advanced far enough? But with his genius, with his gifts, it is not probable, it is not possible that he can remain stationary. I concerted my plans. There are so few men at once so enterprising and so supple, so highly gifted and so diligent. He is well qualified in all departments. As Recorder, he can rapidly acquire the most important knowledge; he will make himself necessary; and should a change take place, he becomes minister.

CLAVIGO. I avow it. Often, too, were these my dreams.

CARLOS. Dreams! As surely as I should succeed in reaching the top of a tower, if I set off with the firm determination not to yield till I had carried my point, so surely would you have overcome all obstacles; and afterwards the rest would have given me no disquietude. You have no fortune from your family, so much the better! You would have become more zealous to acquire, more attentive to preserve. Besides, he who sits at the receipt of custom with-

out enriching himself is a great fool; and I do not see why the country does not owe taxes to the minister as well as to the king. The latter gives his name, and the former the power. When I had arranged all that, I then sought out a fit match for you. I saw many a proud family which would have shut their eyes to your origin, many of the richest, who would have gladly supported the maintenance of your rank, to share the dignity of the second king — and now —

CLAVIGO. You are unjust, you lower my actual condition too much; and do you fancy then that I cannot rise higher, and advance still further.

CARLOS. My dear friend, if you lop off the heart of a young plant, in vain will it afterwards and incessantly put forth countless shoots; it will form, perhaps, a large bush, but it is all over with the kingly attempt of its first growth. And think not that at the court this marriage is regarded with indifference. Have you forgotten what sort of men disappointed your attachment, your union with Marie? Have you forgotten who inspired you with the wise thought of abandoning her? Must I count them all on my fingers?

CLAVIGO. This thought has already distressed me; yes, few will approve this step.

CARLOS. Nobody; and will not your powerful friends be indignant that you, without asking their leave, without consulting them, should have hastily sacrificed yourself like a thoughtless child, who throws away his money in the market on worm-eaten nuts?

CLAVIGO. That is impolite, Carlos, and exaggerated.

CARLOS. Not at all. Let one commit an egregious error through passion, I allow it. To marry a chambermaid because she is as beautiful as an angel! Well, the man is blamed, and yet people envy him.

CLAVIGO. People, always the people!

CARLOS. You know I do not inquire very curiously after the success of others; but it is ever true that he who does nothing for others does nothing for himself; and if men do not wonder at or envy you you are not happy either.

CLAVIGO. The world judges by appearances. Oh! he who possesses Marie's heart is to be envied.

CARLOS. Things appear what they are; but, frankly, I have always thought that there were hidden qualities that render your happiness enviable; for what one sees with his eyes and can comprehend with his understanding —

CLAVIGO. You wish to make me desperate.

CARLOS. "How has that happened?" they will ask in the town. "How has that happened?" they will ask at court. "But, good God! how has that happened? She is poor, without position. If Clavigo had not had an intrigue with her one would not have known that she is in the world; she is said to be well-bred, agreeable, witty!" But who takes to himself a wife for that? That passes away in the first years of marriage. "Ah!" says some one, "she must be beautiful, charmingly, ravishingly beautiful." "That explains the matter," says another.

CLAVIGO (*troubled, lets a deep sigh escape*). Alas!

CARLOS. "Beautiful? Oh," says one lady, "very good! I have not seen her for six years." "She may well be altered," says another. "One must, however, see her, he will soon bring her forth," says a third. People ask, look, are eager, wait, and are impatient; they recall the ever-proud Clavigo, who never let himself be seen in public without leading out in triumph some stately, splendid, haughty Spaniard lady, whose full bosom, blooming cheeks, impassioned eyes—all, all, seemed to ask the world encircling her: "Am not I worthy of my companion?" and who in her pride lets flaunt so widely in the breeze the train of her silken robe, to render her appearance more imposing and remarkable. And now appears the gentleman—and surprise renders the people dumb—he comes accompanied by his tripping little Frenchwoman, whose hollow eyes, whose whole appearance announces consumption, in spite of the red and white with which she has daubed her death-pale countenance. Yes, brother! I become frantic, I run away, when people stop me now and ask, and question, and say they cannot understand——

CLAVIGO (*seizing his hand*). My friend, my brother, I am in a frightful position. I tell you, I avow, I was horror-struck when I saw Marie again. How changed she is!—how pale and exhausted! Oh! it is my fault, my treacheries!——

CARLOS. Follies! visions! She was in consumption when the romance of your love was still unfolding. I told you a thousand times, and . . . But you lovers have your eyes, nay, all your senses closed. Clavigo, it is a shame. All, yes, all to forget thus! A sick wife, who will plague all your posterity, so that all your children and grandchildren will in a few years be politely extinguished, like the sorry lamp of a beggar.—A man who could have been the founder of a

family, which perhaps in future . . . Ah! I shall yet turn crazy, my reason fails me.

CLAVIGO. Carlos, what shall I say to thee? When I saw her again, in the first transport, my heart went out towards her; and alas! when that was gone, compassion — a deep, heartfelt pity was breathed into me: but love . . . Lo! in the warm fulness of joy, I seemed to feel on my neck the cold hand of death, I strove to be cheerful; to play the part of a happy man again, in presence of those who surrounded me: it was all gone, all so stiff, so painfully anxious! Had they not somewhat lost their self-possession they would have remarked it.

CARLOS. Hell! death and devil! and you are going to marry her! (CLAVIGO remains absorbed, without giving any answer.) It is all over with thee; lost for ever. Farewell, brother, and let me forget all; let me, all the rest of my solitary life, furiously curse your fatal blindness. Ah! to sacrifice all, to render oneself despicable in the eyes of the world, and not even then satisfy thereby a passion, a desire! To contract a malady voluntarily, which, while undermining your inmost strength, will make you hideous in the eyes of men!

CLAVIGO. Carlos! Carlos!

CARLOS. Would that you had never been elevated, at least you would never have fallen! With what eyes will they look on all this! "There is the brother," they will say; "he must be a lad of spirit; he has put to the last shift Clavigo, who dared not draw the sword." "Ah!" our flaunting courtiers will say, "'Twas to be seen all along that he was not a gentleman." "Ah, ah!" exclaims another, while drawing his hat over his eyes, "the Frenchman should have come to me!" And he claps himself on the paunch — a fellow, who perhaps were not worthy of being your groom!

CLAVIGO (*expresses the most acute distress, and falls into the arms of CARLOS amid a torrent of tears*). Save me! My friend! my best friend, save me! Save me from a double perjury! from an unutterable disgrace, from myself. I am undone!

CARLOS. Poor, hapless fellow! I hoped that these youthful furies, these stormy tears, this absorbing melancholy would have been gone; I hoped to behold you, as a man, agitated no more, no more plunged in that overwhelming sorrow, which in other days you so often uttered on my breast with tears. Be a man, Clavigo, quit yourself like a man!

CLAVIGO. Let me weep! (*Throws himself into a chair.*)

CARLOS. Alas for you, that you have entered on a career which you will not pursue to the end! With your heart, with your sentiments, which would make a tranquil citizen happy, you must unite this unhappy hankering after greatness! And what is greatness, Clavigo? To raise oneself above others in rank and consequence? Believe it not. If your heart is not greater than that of others; if you are not able to place yourself calmly above the circumstances which would embarrass an ordinary man, then with all your ribbons, all your stars, even with the crown itself, you are but an ordinary man. Take heart, compose your mind! (CLAVIGO rises, looks on CARLOS, and holds out his hand, which CARLOS eagerly seizes.) Come, come, my friend! make up your mind. Look, I will put everything aside, and will say to you: Here lie two proposals on equal scales; either you marry Marie and find your happiness in a quiet citizen-like life, in tranquil homely joys; or you bend your steps along the path of honor to a near goal. — I will put all aside, and say: The beam of the balance is in equilibrium; your decision will settle which of the two scales will carry the day! Good! But decide! There is nothing in the world so pitiable as an undecided man, who wavers between two feelings, hoping to reconcile them, and does not understand that nothing can unite them except the doubt, the disquietude, which rack him. Go, and give Marie your hand, act as an honorable man, who, to keep his word, sacrifices the happiness of his life, who regards it a duty to repair the wrong he has committed; but who, on the other hand, has never extended the sphere of his passions and activity further than to be in a position to repair the wrong he has committed; and thus enjoy the happiness of a tranquil retirement, the approval of a peaceful conscience, and all the blessedness belonging to those who are able to create their own happiness and provide the joy of their families. Decide, and then shall I say — You are every inch a man.

CLAVIGO. Carlos! Oh, for a spark of your strength — of your courage!

CARLOS. It slumbers in thee, and I will blow till it burst forth into flames. Behold on the one side the fortune and the greatness which await you. I shall not set off this future with the variegated hues of poetry; represent it to yourself with such vivacity as it clearly appeared before your mind till the hot-headed Frenchman made you lose

your wits. But there, too, Clavigo, be a man thoroughly, and take your way straight, without looking to the right or left. May your soul expand, and this great idea become deeply rooted there, that extraordinary men are extraordinary, precisely because their duties differ from the duties of ordinary men; that he, whose task it is to watch over, to govern, to preserve a great whole, needs not reproach himself with having overlooked trifling circumstances, with having sacrificed small matters to the good of the whole. Thus acts the Creator in nature, and the king in the state; why should not we do the same, in order to resemble them?

CLAVIGO. Carlos, I am a little man.

CARLOS. We are not little when circumstances trouble us, only when they overpower us. Yet another breath, and you are yourself again. Cast away the remnant of a pitiable passion, which in these days as little becomes you as the little gray jacket and modest mien with which you arrived at Madrid. What the poor girl has done for you, you have long ago returned; and that your first friendly reception was from her hands. Oh, another would, for the pleasure of your acquaintance, have done as much and more, without putting forth such pretensions . . . and would you take it into your head to give your schoolmaster the half of your fortune because he taught you the alphabet thirty years ago? What say you, Clavigo!

CLAVIGO. That is all very well. On the whole you may be right, it may be so; only how are we to get out of the embarrassment in which we stick fast? Advise me there, help me there, and then lecture.

CARLOS. All right! You are, then, resolved.

CLAVIGO. Give me the power and I shall exert it. I am not able to think; think for me.

CARLOS. Thus then. First you will go and meet this person, and then you will demand, sword in hand, the vindication which you inconsiderately and involuntarily gave.

CLAVIGO. I have it already; he tore it and returned it to me.

CARLOS. Excellent! excellent! That step taken already — and you have let me speak so long? — Your course is so much the shorter! Write him quite coolly: “You find it inconvenient to marry his sister; the reason he can learn if he will repair to-night to a certain place, attended by

a friend, and armed with any weapons he likes." And then follows the signature. Come, Clavigo, write that; I shall be your second — and the devil is in it if — (CLAVIGO *approaches the table.*) Listen! A word! If I think aright of it, it is an extravagant proposal. Who are we to risk our lives with a mad adventurer? Besides, the man's conduct, his standing, do not deserve that we regard him as an equal, Listen, then! Now if I were to bring forward a criminal charge against him, that he arrived secretly at Madrid, got himself announced under a pseudonym with an accomplice, at first gained your confidence with friendly words, and thereafter fell upon you all of a sudden, forcibly obtained a declaration, and afterwards went off to spread it abroad — that will prove his ruin: he shall learn what it means — to invade the tranquillity of a Spaniard under his own roof.

CLAVIGO. You are right.

CARLOS. But till the lawsuit has begun, in which interval the gentleman might play all sorts of tricks, if now we could meanwhile play a dead-sure game, and seize him tight by the head.

CLAVIGO. I understand, and know you are the man to carry it out.

CARLOS. Ah! well! if I, who have been at it for five-and-twenty years, and have witnessed tears of anguish trickling down the cheeks of the foremost men, if I cannot unravel such child's play! So then, give me full power; you need do nothing, write nothing. He, who orders the imprisonment of the brother, pantomimically intimates that he will have nothing to do with the sister.

CLAVIGO. No, Carlos! Let it go as it may, I cannot, I will not suffer that. Beaumarchais is a worthy man, and he shall not languish in an ignominious prison on account of his righteous cause. Another plan, Carlos, another!

CARLOS. Bah! bah! Stuff and nonsense! We will not devour him. He will be well lodged and well cared for, and thereafter he cannot hold out long: for, observe, when he perceives that we are in earnest, all his theatrical rage will cease; he will come to terms, return smarting to France, and be only too thankful, if we secure a yearly pension for his sister — perhaps the only thing he had in view.

CLAVIGO. So be it then! Only let him be kindly dealt with.

CARLOS. Leave that to me. — One precaution more! We

cannot know but that it may be blabbed out—that the thing may get wind, and then he gets over you, and all is lost. Therefore, leave your house, so that not even your servants know where you have gone. Take with you only absolute necessities. I shall despatch you a fellow, who will conduct you and bring you to a place where the holy Hermandad herself will not find you. I have always in readiness a few of these mouse-holes. Adieu!

CLAVIGO. Good bye!

CARLOS. Cheer up! cheerily! When it is all over, brother, we will enjoy ourselves. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II. GUILBERT'S *abode*.

SOPHIE GUILBERT, MARIE BEAUMARCHAIS *at work*.

MARIE. With such violence did Buenco depart?

SOPHIE. It was natural. He loves you, and how could he endure the sight of the man whom he must doubly hate?

MARIE. He is the best, most upright citizen I have ever known. *(Showing her work to her sister.)* It seems to me I must do it thus. I shall take in that and turn the end up. That will do nicely.

SOPHIE. Very well. And I am going to put a straw-colored ribbon on my bonnet; it becomes me best. Do you smile?

MARIE. I am laughing at myself. We girls are a queer set of people, I must say: hardly are our spirits but a little raised when straightway we are busy with finery and ribbons.

SOPHIE. You cannot well apply that to yourself; from the moment Clavigo forsook you, nothing could give you the least pleasure. *(MARIE starts up and looks towards the door.)* What is the matter?

MARIE *(anxious)*. I thought I heard some one come in! My poor heart! O, it will destroy me yet! Feel how it beats with that groundless terror!

SOPHIE. You look pale. Be calm, I beseech you, my love!

MARIE *(pointing to her chest)*. I feel here an oppression—a sudden pain. It will kill me.

SOPHIE. Be careful.

MARIE. I am a foolish, hapless girl. Pain and joy with all their force have undermined my poor life. I tell you

'tis but half a joy that I have him again. Little shall I enjoy the happiness that awaits me in his arms; perhaps not at all.

SOPHIE. My sister, my only love! You are wearing yourself out with these visions.

MARIE. Why shall I deceive myself?

SOPHIE. You are young and happy, and can hope for all.

MARIE. Hope! O the only sweet balm of life! How often it charms my soul! Happy youthful dreams hover before me and accompany the beloved form of the peerless one, who now is mine again. O Sophie, he is so winsome! Whilst I saw him not, he has—I know not how I shall express it;—all the qualities which in former days lay hid in him through his diffidence, have unfolded themselves. He has become a man, and must with this pure feeling of his, with which he advances, that is so entirely devoid of pride and vanity—he must captivate all hearts.—And he shall be mine? No, my sister, I was not worthy of him—and now I am much less so!

SOPHIE. Take him, however, and be happy. I hear your brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS *enters*.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Where is Guilbert?

SOPHIE. He has been gone some time; he cannot be much longer.

MARIE. What is the matter, brother? (*Springing up and falling on his neck.*) Dear brother, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Nothing, nothing at all, my Marie!

MARIE. If I am thy Marie, do tell me what is on thy mind!

SOPHIE. Let him be. Men often look vexed without having aught particular on their mind!

MARIE. No, no. I have seen thy face only a little while; but already I read all thy thoughts, all the feelings of thy pure and sincere soul are stamped on thy brow. There is somewhat which makes thee anxious. Speak, what is it?

BEAUMARCHAIS. It is nothing, my love. I hope that at bottom it is nothing. Clavigo—

MARIE. How?

BEAUMARCHAIS. I was at Clavigo's house. He is not at home.

SOPHIE. And does that perplex you?

BEAUMARCHAIS. His porter says he has gone he knows not where; no one knows how long. If he should be hiding himself! If he be really gone! Whither? for what reason?

MARIE. We will wait.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thy tongue lies. Ah! the paleness of thy cheeks, the trembling of thy limbs, all speaks and testifies that thou canst not wait. Dear sister! (*Clasps her in his arms.*) On this beating, painfully trembling heart I vow, — hear me, O God, who art righteous! hear me, all His saints! — thou shalt be avenged if he — my senses abandon me at the thought — if he fail, if he make himself guilty of a frightful, double perjury; if he mock at our misery . . . No, it is, it is not possible, not possible — Thou shalt be avenged.

SOPHIE. All too soon, too precipitate. Be careful of her health, I beseech you, my brother. (*MARIE sits down.*) What ails thee? You are fainting.

MARIE. No, no. You are so anxious.

SOPHIE (*gives her water*). Take this glass.

MARIE. No, no! what avails that? Well, for my own sake, give it me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Where is Guilbert? Where is Buenco? Send for them, I entreat you. (*SOPHIE exit.*) How dost thou feel, Marie?

MARIE. Well, quite well! Think'st thou then, brother —

BEAUMARCHAIS. What, my love?

MARIE. Ah!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Is your breathing painful?

MARIE. The disordered beating of my heart oppresses me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Have you then no remedy? Do you use no anodyne?

MARIE. I know of only one remedy, and for that I have prayed to God many a time and oft.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thou shalt have it, and I hope from my hand.

MARIE. That will do well.

SOPHIE *enters*.

SOPHIE. A courier has just brought this letter; he comes from Aranjuez.

BEAUMARCHAIS. That is the seal and the hand of our ambassador.

SOPHIE. I bade him dismount and take some refreshment; he would not, because he had yet more dispatches.

MARIE. Will you, my love, send the servant for the physician?

SOPHIE. Are you ill? Holy God! what ails thee?

MARIE. You will make me so anxious that at last I shall scarcely dare ask for a glass of water . . . Sophie! Brother! — What is in the letter? See, how he trembles! how all courage leaves him!

SOPHIE. Brother, my brother! (BEAUMARCHAIS *throws himself speechless into a chair and lets the letter fall.*) My brother! (*Lifts up the letter and reads it.*)

MARIE. Let me see it! I must — (*tries to rise*). Alas! I feel it. It is the last. Oh, sister, spare not, for mercy's sake, the last quick death-stroke! — He betrays us!

BEAUMARCHAIS (*springing up*). He betrays us! (*Beating on his brow and breast.*) Here! here! All is as dumb, as dead before my soul, as if a thunder-clap had disordered my senses. Marie! Marie! thou art betrayed! — and I stand here! Whither? — What? — I see nothing, nothing! no way, no safety! (*Throws himself into a seat.*)

GUILBERT *enters*.

SOPHIE. Guilbert! Counsel! Help! We are lost!

GUILBERT. My wife!

SOPHIE. Read! read! The ambassador makes known to our brother: that Clavigo has made a criminal complaint against him, under the pretext that he introduced himself into his house under a false name; and that, taking him by surprise in bed and presenting a pistol, he compelled him to sign a disgraceful vindication; and if he do not quickly withdraw from the kingdom they will get him thrown into prison, from which the ambassador himself, perhaps, will not be able to deliver him.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*springing up*). Indeed, they shall do so! they shall do so! shall get me imprisoned; but from his corpse, from the place where I shall have glutted my vengeance with his blood. Ah! the stern, frightful thirst after his blood fills my whole soul. Thanks to Thee, God in heaven, that Thou vouchsafest to man, amid burning, insupportable wrongs, a solace, a refreshment! What a thirst for vengeance I feel in my breast! how the glorious feeling, the lust for his blood, raises me out of my utter dejection, out of my sluggish indecision; raises me above myself! Vengeance! How I rejoice in it! how all within me strives after him, to seize him, to destroy him.

SOPHIE. Thou art terrible, brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. So much the better. — Ah! No sword, no weapon! with these hands will I strangle him, that the triumph may be mine! all my own the feeling: I have destroyed him!

MARIE. My heart! my heart!

BEAUMARCHAIS. I have not been able to save thee, so thou shalt be avenged. I pant after his footsteps, my teeth lust after his flesh, my gums after his blood. Have I become a frantic wild beast! There burns in every vein, there glows in every nerve, the desire after him, after him! — I could hate forever, who should make away with him by poison, who should rid me of him by assassination. Oh, help me, Guilbert, to seek him out. Where is Buenco? Help me to find him!

GUILBERT. Save yourself! save yourself! you have lost your reason.

MARIE. Flee, my brother!

SOPHIE. Take him away; he will cause his sister's death.

BUENCO *appears*.

BUENCO. Up, sir! away! I foresaw it. I gave heed to all. And now they are in hot pursuit; you are lost if you do not leave the town this moment.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Never! where is Clavigo?

BUENCO. I do not know.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Thou knowest. I entreat you on my knees, tell me.

SOPHIE. For God's sake, Buenco!

MARIE. Ah! air! air! (*Falls back.*) Clavigo! —

BUENCO. Help! she is dying!

SOPHIE. Forsake us not, God in heaven; — Hence, my brother, away!

BEAUMARCHAIS (*falls down before MARIE, who despite every aid does not recover*). To forsake thee! to forsake thee!

SOPHIE. Stay, then, and ruin us all, as you have killed Marie. You are gone, then, O my sister, through the heedlessness of your own brother!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Stop, sister!

SOPHIE (*mocking*). Saviour! — Avenger! — help yourself!

BEAUMARCHAIS. Do I deserve this?

SOPHIE. Give her to me again! And then go to the prison, to the stake; go, pour forth thy blood and give me her again.

BEAUMARCHAIS. Sophie!

SOPHIE. Ha! and she is gone; she is dead — save yourself for us! (*falling on his neck*) my brother, for us! for our father! Haste, haste! That was her fate! she has met it! And there is a God in Heaven; to Him leave vengeance.

BUENCO. Hence! away! Come with me; I will hide you till we find means to get you out of the kingdom.

BEAUMARCHAIS (*falls on MARIE and kisses her*). Sister dear! (*They tear him away, he clasps SOPHIE, she disengages herself. They remove MARIE, and BUENCO and BEAUMARCHAIS retire.*)

GUILBERT, a PHYSICIAN.

SOPHIE (*returning from the room to which they had taken MARIE*). Too late! She is gone! she is dead!

GUILBERT. Come in, sir! See for yourself! It is not possible! [*Exit.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Street before the house of GUILBERT. Night. (The house is open, and before the door stand three men clad in black mantles, holding torches. CLAVIGO enters, wrapped in a cloak, his sword under his arm; a SERVANT goes before him with a torch.)*

CLAVIGO. I told you to avoid this street.

SERVANT. We must have gone a great way round, sir, and you are in such haste. It is not far hence where Don Carlos is lodged.

CLAVIGO. Torches there!

SERVANT. A funeral. Come on, sir.

CLAVIGO. Marie's abode! A funeral! A death-agony shudders through all my limbs! Go, ask whom they are going to bury.

SERVANT (*to the men*). Whom are you going to bury?

THE MEN. Marie de Beaumarchais.

(*CLAVIGO sits down on a stone and covers himself with a cloak.*)

SERVANT (*comes back*). They are going to bury Marie de Beaumarchais.

CLAVIGO (*springing up*). Must thou repeat it? Repeat that word of thunder which strikes all the marrow out of my bones?

SERVANT. Peace, sir! Come on, sir. Consider the danger by which you are surrounded.

CLAVIGO. To hell with thee, reptile! I remain.

SERVANT. O Carlos! O that I could find thee! — Carlos! — he has lost his reason. [Exit.

SCENE II. CLAVIGO. *The Mutes in the distance.*

CLAVIGO. Dead! Marie dead! Torches! her dismal attendants! it is a trick of enchantment, a night vision, that terrifies me; that holds up to me a mirror, in which I may see foreboded the end of all my treacheries. But there is still time. Still! — I tremble! — my heart melts with horror! No! no! thou shalt not die — I come, I come! Vanish, ye spirits of the night, who with your horrible terrors set yourselves in my way. (*He goes up to them.*) Vanish — they remain! Ha! they look round after me! Woe! woe is me! They are men like myself. It is true! true! Canst thou comprehend it? She is dead. It seizes me amid all the horrors of midnight — the feeling — she is dead. There she lies, the flower at your feet! and thou — O have mercy on me, God in heaven — I have not killed her! Hide yourselves, ye stars; look not down! Ye, who have so often beheld the villain, with feelings of the most heartfelt happiness, leave this threshold; through this very street float along in golden dreams, with music and song, and enrapture his maiden listening at the secret casement and lingering in transport. And now I fill the house with wailing and sorrow — and this scene of my bliss with the funeral song — Marie! Marie! take me with thee! take me with thee! (*Mournful music breathes forth a few sounds from within.*) They are setting out on the way to the grave. Stop! stop! Shut not the coffin. Let me see her once more. (*He runs up to the house.*) Ha! into whose presence am I rushing? Whom to face in his terrible sorrow? Her friends! her brother! whose breast is panting with raving grief! (*The music recommences.*) She calls me! she calls me! I come! What anguish is this which overwhelms me? What shuddering withholds me?

(*The music begins for the third time and continues. The torches move before the door; three others come out to them, who range themselves in order to enclose the funeral procession, which now comes out of the house. Six bearers carry the bier, upon which lies the coffin, covered.*)

SCENE III. GUILBERT *and* BUENCO (*in deep mourning.*)CLAVIGO (*coming forward*). Stay!

GUILBERT. What voice is that?

CLAVIGO. Stay! (*The bearers stop.*)

BUENCO. Who dares to interrupt the solemn funeral?

CLAVIGO. Set it down.

GUILBERT. Ha!

BUENCO. Wretch! are thy deeds of shame not yet ended? Is thy victim not safe from thee in the coffin?

CLAVIGO. No more! Make me not frantic. The wretched are dangerous; I must see her. (*He tears off the pall and the lid of the coffin. MARIE is seen lying within it, clad in white, her hands clasped before her; CLAVIGO steps back and covers his face.*)

BUENCO. Wilt thou awake her to murder her again?

CLAVIGO. Poor mocker! Marie! (*He falls down before the coffin.*)SCENE IV. *Enter* BEAUMARCHAIS. *The preceding.*BEAUMARCHAIS. Buenco has left me. They say she is not dead. I must see, spite of hell, I must see her. Ha! torches! a funeral! (*He runs hastily up to it, gazes on the coffin, and falls down speechless. They raise him up; he is as if deprived of sense; GUILBERT holds him.*)CLAVIGO (*who is standing on the other side of the coffin*). Marie! Marie!BEAUMARCHAIS (*springing up*). That is his voice. Who calls Marie? At the sound of that voice what burning rage starts into my veins!CLAVIGO. It is I. (*BEAUMARCHAIS staring wildly around and grasping his sword. GUILBERT holds him.*) I fear not thy blazing eyes, nor the point of thy sword. Oh! look here, here, on these closed eyes — these clasped hands!BEAUMARCHAIS. Dost thou show me that sight? (*He tears himself loose, runs upon CLAVIGO, who instantly draws; they fight; BEAUMARCHAIS pierces him through the breast.*)CLAVIGO (*falling*). I thank thee, brother; thou marriest us. (*He falls upon the coffin.*)BEAUMARCHAIS (*tearing him away*). Hence from this saint, thou fiend!CLAVIGO. Alas! (*The bearers raise up his body and support him.*)

BEAUMARCHAIS. His blood! Look up, Marie, look upon thy bridal ornaments, and then close thine eyes forever. See how I have consecrated thy place of rest with the blood of thy murderer! Charming! Glorious!

SCENE V. *Enter SOPHIE. The preceding.*

SOPHIE. My brother? O my God, what is the matter?

BEAUMARCHAIS. Draw nearer, my love, and see! I hoped to have strewn her bridal bed with roses; see the roses with which I adorn her on her way to heaven!

SOPHIE. We are lost!

CLAVIGO. Save yourself, rash one! save yourself, ere the dawn of day. May God, who sent you for an avenger, conduct you! Sophie, forgive me. Brothers, friends, forgive me.

BEAUMARCHAIS. How the sight of his gushing blood extinguishes all the glowing vengeance within me! how with his departing life vanishes all my rage! (*Going up to him.*) Die, I forgive thee.

CLAVIGO. Your hand! and yours, Sophie! and yours! (*BUENCO hesitates.*)

SOPHIE. Give it him, Buenco.

CLAVIGO. I thank you; you are as good as ever; I thank you. And thou, O spirit of my beloved, if thou still hoverest around this place, look down, see these heavenly favors, bestow thy blessing, and do thou too forgive me. I come! I come! Save yourself, my brother. Tell me, did she forgive me? How did she die?

SOPHIE. Her last word was thy unhappy name. She departed without taking leave of us.

CLAVIGO. I will follow her and bear your farewells to her.

SCENE VI. CARLOS, a SERVANT. *The preceding.*

CARLOS. Clavigo! murderers!

CLAVIGO. Hear me, Carlos! Thou seest here the victim of thy prudence; and now, I conjure thee, for the sake of that blood, in which my life irrevocably flows away, save my brother.

CARLOS. O my friend! (*to the SERVANT*). You stand-
ing there? Fly for a surgeon. [*Exit SERVANT.*]

CLAVIGO. It is in vain; save, save my unhappy brother! thy hand thereon. They have forgiven me, and so forgive I thee. Accompany him to the frontiers, and — oh!

CARLOS (*stamping with his feet*). Clavigo! Clavigo!

CLAVIGO (*drawing nearer to the coffin, upon which they lay him down*). Marie! Thy hand! (*He unfolds her hands and grasps the right hand.*)

SOPHIE (*to BEAUMARCHAIS*). Hence, unhappy one, away!

CLAVIGO. I have her hand, her cold, dead hand. Thou art mine. Yet this last bridal kiss! Alas!

SOPHIE. He is dying! Save thyself, brother! (*BEAUMARCHAIS falls on SOPHIE's neck. She returns the embrace and makes a sign for him to withdraw.*)

EGMONT:

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

TRANSLATED BY ANNA SWANWICK.

This tragedy was commenced in the year 1775, when Goethe was twenty-six years of age—but it was not finished until eleven years later. A rough draft of the whole was made in 1782, but it was only completed and finally re-written during Goethe's residence in Rome, in 1786.



INTRODUCTION TO EGMONT.

IN Schiller's critique upon the tragedy of *Egmont*, Goethe is censured for departing from the truth of history in the delineation of his hero's character, and also for misrepresenting the circumstances of his domestic life. The Egmont of history left behind him a numerous family, anxiety for whose welfare detained him in Brussels when most of his friends sought safety in flight. His withdrawal would have entailed the confiscation of his property, and he shrank from exposing to privation those whose happiness was dearer to him than life; — a consideration which he repeatedly urged in his conferences with the Prince of Orange, when the latter insisted upon the necessity of escape. We see here, not the victim of a blind and foolhardy confidence, as portrayed in Goethe's drama, but the husband and father, regardless of his personal safety in anxiety for the interests of his family.

I shall not inquire which conception is best suited for the purposes of art, but merely subjoin a few extracts from the same critique, in which Schiller does ample justice to Goethe's admirable delineation of the age and country in which the drama is cast, and which are peculiarly valuable from the pen of so competent an authority as the historian of the Fall of the Netherlands.

"Egmont's tragical death resulted from the relation in which he stood to the nation and the government; hence the action of the drama is intimately connected with the political life of the period — an exhibition of which forms its indispensable groundwork. But if we consider what an infinite number of minute circumstances must concur in order to exhibit the spirit of an age, and the political condition of a people, and the art required to combine so many isolated features into an intelligible and organic whole; and if we contemplate, moreover, the peculiar character of the Netherlands, consisting not of one nation, but of an aggregate of

many smaller states, separated from each other by the sharpest contrasts, we shall not cease to wonder at the creative genius, which, triumphing over all these difficulties, conjures up before us, as with an enchanter's wand, the Netherlands of the sixteenth century.

"Not only do we behold these men living and working before us, we dwell among them as their familiar associates; we see, on the other hand, the joyous sociability, the hospitality, the loquacity, the somewhat boastful temper of the people, their republican spirit, ready to boil up at the slightest innovation, and often subsiding again as rapidly on the most trivial grounds; and, on the other hand, we are made acquainted with the burdens under which they groaned, from the new mitres of the bishops, to the French psalms which they were forbidden to sing;—nothing is omitted, no feature introduced which does not bear the stamp of nature and of truth. Such delineation is not the result of premeditated effort, nor can it be commanded by art; it can only be achieved by the poet whose mind is thoroughly imbued with his subject; from him such traits escape unconsciously, and without design, as they do from the individuals whose characters they serve to portray.

"The few scenes in which the citizens of Brussels are introduced appear to us to be the result of profound study, and it would be difficult to find, in so few words, a more admirable historical monument of the Netherlands of that period.

"Equally graphic is that portion of the picture which portrays the spirit of the government, though it must be confessed that the artist has here somewhat softened down the harsher features of the original. This is especially true in reference to the character of the Duchess of Parma. Before his Duke of Alva we tremble, without ever turning from him with aversion; he is a firm, rigid, inaccessible character; 'a brazen tower without gates, the garrison of which must be furnished with wings.' The prudent forecast with which he makes his arrangements for Egmont's arrest excites our admiration, while it removes him from our sympathy. The remaining characters of the drama are delineated with a few masterly strokes. The subtle, taciturn Orange, with his timid, yet comprehensive and all-combining mind, is depicted in a single scene. Both Alva and Egmont are mirrored in the men by whom they are surrounded. This mode of delineation is admirable. The poet, in order to

concentrate the interest upon Egmont, has isolated his hero, and omitted all mention of Count Horn, who shared the same melancholy fate."

The Appendix to Schiller's "History of the Fall of the Netherlands" contains an interesting account of the trial and execution of the Counts Egmont and Horn, which is, however, too long for insertion here.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARGARET OF PARMA, *Daughter of Charles V., and Regent of the Netherlands.*

COUNT EGMONT, *Prince of Gaure.*

WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

THE DUKE OF ALVA.

FERDINAND, *his Natural Son.*

MACHIAVEL, *in the service of the Regent.*

RICHARD, *Egmont's Private Secretary.*

SILVA, } *in the service of Alva.*
GOMEZ, }

CLARA, *the beloved of Egmont.*

HER MOTHER.

BRACKENBURG, *a Citizen's Son.*

SOEST, *a Shopkeeper,*
JETTER, *a Tailor.* } *Citizens of Brussels.*
A CARPENTER,
A SOAPBOILER, }

BUYCK, *a Hollander, a Soldier under Egmont.*

RUYSUM, *a Frieslander, an invalid Soldier and deaf.*

VANSEN, *a Clerk.*

People, Attendants, Guards, etc.

The Scene is laid in Brussels.

EGMONT.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Soldiers and Citizens (with cross-bows).*

JETTER (*steps forward, and bends his cross-bow*). SOEST,
BUYCK, RUYSUM.

SOEST. Come, shoot away, and have done with it! You won't beat me! Three black rings, you never made such a shot in all your life. And so I'm master for this year.

JETTER. Master and king to boot; who envies you? You'll have to pay double reckoning; 'tis only fair you should pay for your dexterity.

BUYCK. Jetter, I'll buy your shot, share the prize, and treat the company. I have already been here so long, and am a debtor for so many civilities. If I miss, then it shall be as if you had shot.

SOEST. I ought to have a voice, for in fact I am the loser. No matter! Come, Buyck, shoot away.

BUYCK (*shoots*). Now, corporal, look out! — One! Two! Three! Four!

SOEST. Four rings! So be it!

ALL. Hurrah! Long live the king! Hurrah! Hurrah!

BUYCK. Thanks, sirs, master even were too much! Thanks for the honor.

JETTER. You have no one to thank but yourself.

RUYSUM. Let me tell you! —

SOEST. How now, gray-beard?

RUYSUM. Let me tell you! — He shoots like his master, he shoots like Egmont.

BUYCK. Compared with him I am only a bungler. He aims with the rifle as no one else does. Not only when he's lucky or in the vein; no! he levels, and the bull's-eye is pierced. I have learned from him. He were, indeed, a block-head, who could serve under him and learn nothing! — But,

sirs, let us not forget: A king maintains his followers; and so, wine here, at the king's charge!

JETTER. We have agreed among ourselves that each —

BUYCK. I am a foreigner and a king, and care not a jot for your laws and customs.

JETTER. Why you are worse than the Spaniard, who has not yet ventured to meddle with them.

RUYSUM. What does he say?

SOEST (*loud to RUYSUM*). He wants to treat us; he will not hear of our clubbing together, the king paying only a double share.

RUYSUM. Let him! under protest, however! 'Tis his master's fashion, too, to be munificent, and to let the money flow in a good cause. (*Wine is brought.*)

ALL. Here's to his majesty! Hurrah!

JETTER (*to BUYCK*). That means your majesty, of course.

BUYCK. My hearty thanks, if it be so.

SOEST. Assuredly! A Netherlander does not find it easy to drink the health of his Spanish majesty from his heart.

RUYSUM. Who?

SOEST (*aloud*). Philip the Second, King of Spain.

RUYSUM. Our most gracious king and master! Long life to him.

SOEST. Did you not like his father, Charles the Fifth, better?

RUYSUM. God bless him! He was a king, indeed! His hand reached over the whole earth, and he was all in all. Yet, when he met you, he'd greet you just as one neighbor greets another, — and if you were frightened, he knew so well how to put you at your ease — ay, you understand me — he walked out, rode out, just as it came into his head, with very few followers. We all wept when he resigned the government here to his son. You understand me — he is another sort of man, he's more majestic.

JETTER. When he was here, he never appeared in public, except in pomp and royal state. He speaks little, they say.

SOEST. He is no king for us Netherlanders. Our princes must be joyous and free like ourselves, must live and let live. We will neither be despised nor oppressed, good-natured fools though we be.

JETTER. The king, methinks, were a gracious sovereign enough, if he had only better counsellors.

SOEST. No, no! He has no affection for us Nether-

landers; he has no heart for the people; he loves us not; how then can we love him? Why is everybody so fond of Count Egmont? Why are we all so devoted to him? Why, because one can read in his face that he loves us; because joyousness, open-heartedness, and good-nature speak in his eyes; because he possesses nothing that he does not share with him who needs it, ay, and with him who needs it not. Long live Count Egmont! Buyck, it is for you to give the first toast; give us your master's health.

BUYCK. With all my heart; here's to Count Egmont! Hurrah!

RUYSUM. Conqueror of St. Quintin.

BUYCK. The hero of Gravelines.

ALL. Hurrah!

RUYSUM. St. Quintin was my last battle. I was hardly able to crawl along, and could with difficulty carry my heavy rifle. I managed, notwithstanding, to singe the skin of the French once more, and, as a parting gift, received a grazing shot in my right leg.

BUYCK. Gravelines! Ha, my friends, we had sharp work of it there! The victory was all our own. Did not those French dogs carry fire and desolation into the very heart of Flanders? We gave it them, however! The old, hard-fisted veterans held out bravely for a while, but we pushed on, fired away, and laid about us till they made wry faces, and their lines gave way. Then Egmont's horse was shot under him; and for a long time we fought pell-mell, man to man, horse to horse, troop to troop, on the broad, flat sea-sand. Suddenly, as if from heaven, down came the cannon-shot from the mouth of the river, bang, bang, right into the midst of the French. These were English who, under Admiral Malin, happened to be sailing past from Dunkirk. They did not help us much, 'tis true; they could only approach with their smallest vessels, and that not near enough;—besides, their shot fell sometimes among our troops. It did some good, however! It broke the French lines, and raised our courage. Away it went. Helter-skelter! topsy-turvy! all struck dead, or forced into the water; the fellows were drowned the moment they tasted the water, while we Hollanders dashed in after them. Being amphibious, we were as much in our element as frogs, and hacked away at the enemy, and shot them down as if they had been ducks. The few who struggled through were struck dead in their flight by the peasant women,

armed with hoes and pitchforks. His Gallic majesty was compelled at once to hold out his paw and make peace. And that peace you owe to us, to the great Egmont.

ALL. Hurrah for the great Egmont! Hurrah! Hurrah!

JETTER. Had they but appointed him Regent instead of Margaret of Parma!

SOEST. Not so! Truth is truth! I'll not hear Margaret abused. Now it is my turn. Long live our gracious lady!

ALL. Long life to her!

SOEST. Truly, there are excellent women in that family. Long live the Regent!

JETTER. Prudent she is, and moderate in all she does; if she would only not hold so fast and stiffly with the priests. It is partly her fault, too, that we have the fourteen new mitres in the land. Of what use are they, I should like to know? Why, that foreigners may be shoved into the good benefices, where formerly abbots were chosen out of the chapters! And we're to believe it's for the sake of religion. We know better. Three bishops were enough for us; things went on decently and reputably. Now each must busy himself as if he were needed; and this gives rise every moment to dissensions and ill-will. And the more you agitate the matter, so much the worse it grows. (*They drink.*)

SOEST. But it was the will of the king; she cannot alter it, one way or another.

JETTER. Then we may not even sing the new psalms; but ribald songs, as many as we please. And why? There is heresy in them, they say, and heaven knows what. I have sung some of them, however; they are new, to be sure, but I see no harm in them.

BUYCK. Ask their leave, forsooth! In our province we sing just what we please. That's because Count Egmont is our stadtholder, who does not trouble himself about such matters. In Ghent, Ypres, and throughout the whole of Flanders, anybody sings them that chooses. (*Aloud to RUYSUM.*) There is nothing more harmless than a church hymn — is there, father?

RUYSUM. What, indeed! It is a godly work, and truly edifying.

JETTER. They say, however, that they are not of the right sort, not of their sort, and, since it is dangerous, we had better leave them alone. The officers of the Inquisition

are always lurking and spying about; many an honest fellow has already fallen into their clutches. They had not gone so far as to meddle with conscience! If they will not allow me to do what I like, they might at least let me think and sing as I please.

SOEST. The Inquisition won't do here. We are not made like the Spaniards, to let our consciences be tyrannized over. The nobles must look to it, and clip its wings betimes.

JETTER. It is a great bore. Whenever it comes into their worships' heads to break into my house, and I am sitting there at my work, humming a French psalm, thinking nothing about it, neither good nor bad — singing it just because it is in my throat; — forthwith I am a heretic, and am clapped into prison. Or, if I am passing through the country, and stand near a crowd listening to a new preacher, one of those who have come from Germany; instantly I am called a rebel, and am in danger of losing my head! Have you ever heard one of these preachers?

SOEST. A worthy set of people! Not long ago I heard one of them preach in a field, before thousands and thousands of people. He gave us a sort of dish very different from that of our humdrum preachers, who, from the pulpit, choke their hearers with scraps of Latin. He spoke from his heart; told us how we had till now been led by the nose, how we had been kept in darkness, and how we might procure more light; — ay, and he proved it all out of the Bible.

JETTER. There may be something in it. I always said as much, and have often pondered over the matter. It has long been running in my head.

BUYCK. All the people run after them.

SOEST. No wonder, since they hear both what is good and what is new.

JETTER. And what is it all about? Surely they might let every one preach after his own fashion.

BUYCK. Come, sirs! While you are talking, you forget the wine and the Prince of Orange.

JETTER. We must not forget him. He's a very wall of defence. In thinking of him, one fancies that if one could only hide behind him, the devil himself could not get at one. Here's to William of Orange! Hurrah!

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah!

SOEST. Now, gray-beard, let's have your toast.

RUYSUM. Here's to old soldiers! To all soldiers! War forever!

BUYCK. Bravo, old fellow. Here's to all soldiers. War forever!

JETTER. War! War! Do ye know what ye are shouting about? That it should slip glibly from your tongue is natural enough; but what wretched work it is for us, I have not words to tell you. To be stunned the whole year round by the beating of the drum; to hear of nothing except how one troop marched here, and another there; how they came over this height, and halted near that mill; how many were left dead on this field, and how many on that; how they press forward, and how one wins, and another loses, without being able to comprehend what they are fighting about; how a town is taken, how the citizens are put to the sword, and how it fares with the poor women and innocent children. This is a grief and a trouble, and then one thinks every moment, "Here they come! It will be our turn next."

SOEST. Therefore every citizen must be practised in the use of arms.

JETTER. Fine talking, indeed, for him who has a wife and children. And yet I would rather hear of soldiers than see them.

BUYCK. I might take offence at that.

JETTER. It was not intended for you, countryman. When we got rid of the Spanish garrison we breathed freely again.

SOEST. Faith! they pressed on you heavily enough.

JETTER. Mind your own business.

SOEST. They came to sharp quarters with you.

JETTER. Hold your tongue.

SOEST. They drove him out of kitchen, cellar, chamber — and bed. *(They laugh.)*

JETTER. You are a blockhead.

BUYCK. Peace, sirs! Must the soldier cry peace? Since you will not hear anything about us, let us have a toast of your own — a citizen's toast.

JETTER. We're all ready for that! Safety and peace!

SOEST. Order and freedom!

BUYCK. Bravo! That will content us all.

(They ring their glasses together, and joyously repeat the words, but in such a manner that each utters a different sound, and it becomes a kind of chant. The old man listens, and at length joins in.)

ALL. Safety and peace! Order and freedom!

SCENE II. *Palace of the Regent.*

MARGARET OF PARMA (*in a hunting dress*). COURTIER, PAGE, SERVANTS.

REGENT. Put off the hunt, I shall not ride to-day. Bid Machiavel attend me. [*Exeunt all but the REGENT.*]

The thought of these terrible events leaves me no repose! Nothing can amuse, nothing divert my mind. These images, these cares are always before me. The king will now say that these are the natural fruits of my kindness, of my clemency; yet my conscience assures me that I have adopted the wisest, the most prudent course. Ought I sooner to have kindled and spread abroad these flames with the breath of wrath? my hope was to keep them in, to let them smoulder in their own ashes. Yes, my inward conviction, and my knowledge of the circumstances, justify my conduct in my own eyes; but in what light will it appear to my brother? For can it be denied that the insolence of these foreign teachers waxes daily more audacious? They have desecrated our sanctuaries, unsettled the dull minds of the people, and conjured up amongst them a spirit of delusion. Impure spirits have mingled among the insurgents, horrible deeds have been perpetrated, which to think of makes one shudder, and of these a circumstantial account must be transmitted to court instantly. Prompt and minute must be my communication, lest rumor outrun my messenger, and the king suspect that some particulars have been purposely withheld. I can see no means, severe or mild, by which to stem the evil. Oh, what are we great ones on the waves of humanity? We think to control them, and are ourselves driven to and fro, hither and thither. *

Enter MACHIAVEL

REGENT. Are the despatches to the king prepared?

MACHIAVEL. In an hour they will be ready for your signature.

REGENT. Have you made the report sufficiently circumstantial?

MACHIAVEL. Full and circumstantial, as the king loves to have it. I relate how the rage of the iconoclasts first broke out at St. Omer. How a furious multitude, with staves, hatchets, hammers, ladders and cords, accompanied by a few armed men, first assailed the chapels, churches,

and convents, drove out the worshippers, forced the barred gates, threw everything into confusion, tore down the altars, destroyed the statues of the saints, defaced the pictures, and dashed to atoms, and trampled under foot whatever that was consecrated and holy came in their way. How the crowd increased as it advanced, and how the inhabitants of Ypres opened their gates at its approach. How, with incredible rapidity, they demolished the cathedral, and burned the library of the bishop. How a vast multitude, possessed by the like frenzy, dispersed themselves through Menin, Comines, Verviers, Lille, nowhere encountered opposition; and how, through almost the whole of Flanders, in a single moment, the monstrous conspiracy declared itself and was accomplished.

REGENT. Alas! Your recital rends my heart anew; and the fear that the evil will wax greater and greater adds to my grief. Tell me your thoughts, Machiavel!

MACHIAVEL. Pardon me, your Highness, my thoughts will appear to you but as idle fancies; and though you always seem well satisfied with my services, you have seldom felt inclined to follow my advice. How often have you said in jest: "You see too far, Machiavel! You should be an historian; he who acts must provide for the exigency of the hour." And yet, have I not predicted this terrible history? Have I not foreseen it all?

REGENT. I, too, foresee many things without being able to avert them.

MACHIAVEL. In one word, then:—you will not be able to suppress the new faith. Let it be recognized, separate its votaries from the true believers, give them churches of their own, include them within the pale of social order, subject them to the restraints of law,—do this, and you will at once tranquillize the insurgents. All other measures will prove abortive, and you will depopulate the country.

REGENT. Have you forgotten with what aversion the mere suggestion of toleration was rejected by my brother? Know you not, how in every letter he urgently recommends to me the maintenance of the true faith? That he will not hear of tranquillity and order being restored at the expense of religion? Even in the provinces, does he not maintain spies, unknown to us, in order to ascertain who inclines to the new doctrines? Has he not, to our astonishment, named to us this or that individual residing in our very neighborhood, who, without its being known, was obnoxious to the

charge of heresy? Does he not enjoin harshness and severity? and am I to be lenient? Am I to recommend for his adoption measures of indulgence and toleration? Should I not thus lose all credit with him, and at once forfeit his confidence?

MACHIAVEL. I know it. The king commands, and puts you in full possession of his intentions. You are to restore tranquillity and peace by measures which cannot fail still more to embitter men's minds, and which must inevitably kindle the flames of war from one extremity of the country to the other. Consider well what you are doing. The principal merchants are infected — nobles, citizens, soldiers. What avails persisting in our opinion when everything is changing around us? Oh, that some good genius would suggest to Philip that it better becomes a monarch to govern burghers of two different creeds, than to excite them to mutual destruction!

REGENT. Never let me hear such words again. Full well I know that the policy of statesmen rarely maintains truth and fidelity; that it excludes from the heart candor, charity, toleration. In secular affairs, this is, alas! only too true; but shall we trifle with God as we do with each other? Shall we be indifferent to our established faith, for the sake of which so many have sacrificed their lives? Shall we abandon it to these far-fetched, uncertain, and self-contradicting heresies?

MACHIAVEL. Think not the worse of me for what I have uttered.

REGENT. I know you and your fidelity. I know, too, that a man may be both honest and sagacious, and yet miss the best and nearest way to the salvation of his soul. There are others, Machiavel, men whom I esteem, yet whom I needs must blame.

MACHIAVEL. To whom do you refer?

REGENT. I must confess that Egmont caused me to-day deep and heartfelt annoyance

MACHIAVEL. How so?

REGENT. By his accustomed demeanor, his usual indifference and levity. I received the fatal tidings as I was leaving church, attended by him and several others. I did not restrain my anguish, I broke forth into lamentations, loud and deep, and turning to him, exclaimed, "See what is going on in your province! Do you suffer it, Count, you in whom the king confided so implicitly?"

MACHIAVEL. And what was his reply?

REGENT. As if it were a mere trifle, an affair of no moment, he answered: "Were the Netherlanders but satisfied as to their constitution, the rest would soon follow."

MACHIAVEL. There was, perhaps, more truth than discretion or piety in his words. How can we hope to acquire and to maintain the confidence of the Netherlander when he sees that we are more interested in appropriating his possessions than in promoting his welfare, temporal or spiritual? Does the number of souls saved by the new bishops exceed that of the fat benefices they have swallowed? And are they not for the most part foreigners? As yet, the office of stadtholder has been held by Netherlanders; but do not the Spaniards betray their great and irresistible desire to possess themselves of these places? Will not people prefer being governed by their own countrymen, and according to their ancient customs, rather than by foreigners, who, from their first entrance into the land, endeavor to enrich themselves at the general expense, who measure everything by a foreign standard, and exercise their authority without cordiality or sympathy?

REGENT. You take part with our opponents?

MACHIAVEL. Assuredly not in my heart. Would that with my understanding I could be wholly on our side.

REGENT. If such is your opinion, it were better I should resign the regency to them; for both Egmont and Orange entertained great hopes of occupying this position. Then they were adversaries; now they are leagued against me, and have become friends — inseparable friends.

MACHIAVEL. A dangerous pair.

REGENT. To speak candidly, I fear Orange. — I fear for Egmont. — Orange meditates some dangerous scheme, his thoughts are far-reaching, he is reserved, appears to accede to everything, never contradicts, and while maintaining the show of reverence, with clear foresight accomplishes his own designs.

MACHIAVEL. Egmont, on the contrary, advances with a bold step, as if the world were all his own.

REGENT. He bears his head as proudly as if the hand of majesty were not suspended over him.

MACHIAVEL. The eyes of all the people are fixed upon him, and he is the idol of their hearts.

REGENT. He has never assumed the least disguise, and carries himself as if no one had a right to call him to

account. He still bears the name of Egmont. Count Egmont is the title by which he loves to hear himself addressed, as though he would fain be reminded that his ancestors were masters of Guelderland. Why does he not assume his proper title, — Prince of Gaure? What object has he in view? Would he again revive extinguished claims?

MACHIAVEL. I hold him to be a faithful servant of the king.

REGENT. Were he so inclined, what important service he could render to the government! Whereas now, without benefiting himself, he has caused us unspeakable vexation. His banquets and entertainments have done more to unite the nobles and to knit them together than the most dangerous secret associations. With his toasts his guests have drunk in a permanent intoxication, a giddy frenzy, that never subsides. How often have his facetious jests stirred up the minds of the populace? and what an excitement was produced among the mob by the new liveries and the extravagant devices of his followers!

MACHIAVEL. I am convinced he had no design.

REGENT. Be that as it may, it is bad enough. As I said before, he injures us without benefiting himself. He treats as a jest matters of serious import; and, not to appear negligent and remiss, we are forced to treat seriously what he intended as a jest. Thus one urges on the other; and what we are endeavoring to avert is actually brought to pass. He is more dangerous than the acknowledged head of a conspiracy; and I am much mistaken if it is not all remembered against him at court. I cannot deny that scarcely a day passes in which he does not wound me — deeply wound me.

MACHIAVEL. He appears to me to act on all occasions according to the dictates of his conscience.

REGENT. His conscience has a convenient mirror. His demeanor is often offensive. He carries himself as if he felt he were the master here, and were withheld by courtesy alone from making us feel his supremacy; as if he would not exactly drive us out of the country; there'll be no need for that.

MACHIAVEL. I entreat you, put not too harsh a construction upon his frank and joyous temper, which treats lightly matters of serious moment. You but injure yourself and him.

REGENT. I interpret nothing. I speak only of inevitable consequences, and I know him. His patent of nobility and the Golden Fleece upon his breast strengthen his confidence, his audacity. Both can protect him against any sudden outbreak of royal displeasure. Consider the matter closely, and he is alone responsible for the whole mischief that has broken out in Flanders. From the first, he connived at the proceedings of the foreign teachers, avoided stringent measures, and perhaps rejoiced in secret that they gave us so much to do. Let me alone; on this occasion, I will give utterance to that which weighs upon my heart; I will not shoot my arrow in vain. I know where he is vulnerable. For he is vulnerable.

MACHIAVEL. Have you summoned the council? Will Orange attend?

REGENT. I have sent for him to Antwerp. I will lay upon their shoulders the burden of responsibility; they shall either strenuously co-operate with me in quelling the evil, or at once declare themselves rebels. Let the letters be completed without delay, and bring them for my signature. Then hasten to despatch the trusty Vasca to Madrid; he is faithful and indefatigable; let him use all diligence, that he may not be anticipated by common report, that my brother may receive the intelligence first through him. I will myself speak with him ere he departs.

MACHIAVEL. Your orders shall be promptly and punctually obeyed.

SCENE III. *Citizen's House.*

CLARA, *her* MOTHER, BRACKENBURG.

CLARA. Will you not hold the yarn for me, Brackenburg?

BRACKENBURG. I entreat you, excuse me, Clara.

CLARA. What ails you? Why refuse me this trifling service?

BRACKENBURG. When I hold the yarn, I stand as it were spell-bound before you, and cannot escape your eyes.

CLARA. Nonsense! Come and hold!

MOTHER (*knitting in her arm-chair*). Give us a song! Brackenburg sings so good a second. You used to be merry once, and I had always something to laugh at.

BRACKENBURG. Once!

CLARA. Well, let us sing.

BRACKENBURG. As you please.

CLARA. Merrily, then, and sing away. 'Tis a soldier's song, my favorite. (*She winds yarn, and sings with BRACKENBURG.*)

The drum is resounding,
And shrill the fife plays;
My love, for the battle,
His brave troop arrays;
He lifts his lance high,
And the people he sways.
My blood it is boiling!
My heart throbs pit-pat!
Oh, had I a jacket,
With hose and with hat!

How boldly I'd follow,
And march through the gate;
Through all the wide province
I'd follow him straight.
The foe yield, we capture
Or shoot them! Ah, me!
What heart-thrilling rapture
A soldier to be!

(*During the song, BRACKENBURG has frequently looked at CLARA; at length his voice falters, his eyes fill with tears, he lets the skein fall, and goes to the window. CLARA finishes the song alone, her mother motions to her, half displeased, she rises, advances a few steps towards him, turns back as if irresolute, and again sits down.*)

MOTHER. What is going on in the street, Brackenburg? I hear soldiers marching.

BRACKENBURG. It is the Regent's body-guard.

CLARA. At this hour? What can it mean? (*She rises and joins BRACKENBURG at the window.*) That is not the daily guard; it is more numerous! almost all the troops! Oh, Brackenburg, go! Learn what it means. It must be something unusual. Go, good Brackenburg, do me this favor.

BRACKENBURG. I am going! I will return immediately. (*He offers his hand to CLARA, and she gives him hers.*)

[*Exit BRACKENBURG.*]

MOTHER. Thou sendest him away so soon!

CLARA. I am curious; and, besides — do not be angry, mother — his presence pains me. I never know how I ought to behave towards him. I have done him a wrong,

and it goes to my very heart to see how deeply he feels it. Well, it can't be helped now!

MOTHER. He is such a true-hearted fellow!

CLARA. I cannot help it, I must treat him kindly. Often, without a thought, I return the gentle, loving pressure of his hand. I reproach myself that I am deceiving him, that I am nourishing in his heart a vain hope. I am in a sad plight! God knows I do not willingly deceive him. I do not wish him to hope, yet I cannot let him despair!

MOTHER. That is not as it should be.

CLARA. I liked him once, and in my soul I like him still. I could have married him; yet I believe I was never really in love with him.

MOTHER. Thou wouldst always have been happy with him.

CLARA. I should have been provided for, and have led a quiet life.

MOTHER. And through thy fault it has all been trifled away.

CLARA. I am in a strange position. When I think how it has come to pass, I know it, indeed, and I know it not. But I have only to look upon Egmont, and I understand it all; ay, and stranger things would seem natural then. Oh, what a man he is! All the provinces worship him. And in his arms should not I be the happiest creature in the world?

MOTHER. And how will it be in the future?

CLARA. I only ask does he love me? — does he love me? — as if there were any doubt about it.

MOTHER. One has nothing but anxiety of heart with one's children. Always care and sorrow, whatever may be the end of it! It cannot come to good! Thou hast made thyself wretched! Thou hast made thy mother wretched, too.

CLARA (*quietly*). Yet thou didst allow it in the beginning.

MOTHER. Alas! I was too indulgent; I am always too indulgent.

CLARA. When Egmont rode by, and I ran to the window, did you chide me then? Did you not come to the window yourself? When he looked up, smiled, nodded, and greeted me, was it displeasing to you? Did you not feel yourself honored in your daughter?

MOTHER. Go on with your reproaches.

CLARA (*with emotion*). Then, when he passed more frequently, and we felt sure that it was on my account that he came this way, did you not remark it yourself with secret joy? Did you call me away when I stood behind the window-pane and awaited him?

MOTHER. Could I imagine that it would go so far?

CLARA (*with faltering voice, and repressed tears*). And then, one evening, when, enveloped in his mantle, he surprised us as we sat at our lamp, who busied herself in receiving him, while I remained, lost in astonishment, as if fastened to my chair?

MOTHER. Could I imagine that the prudent Clara would so soon be carried away by this unhappy love? I must now endure that, my daughter —

CLARA (*bursting into tears*). Mother! How can you? You take pleasure in tormenting me!

MOTHER (*weeping*). Ay, weep away! Make me yet more wretched by thy grief. Is it not misery enough that my only daughter is a castaway!

CLARA (*rising, and speaking coldly*). A castaway! The beloved of Egmont a castaway! — What princess would not envy the poor Clara a place in his heart? Oh, mother, — my own mother, you were not wont to speak thus! Dear mother, be kind! — Let the people think, let the neighbors whisper, what they like — this chamber, this lowly house, is a paradise since Egmont's love has had its abode in it.

MOTHER. One cannot help liking him, that is true. He is always so kind, frank, and open-hearted.

CLARA. There is not a drop of false blood in his veins. And then, mother, he is indeed the great Egmont; yet, when he comes to me, how tender he is, how kind! How he tries to conceal from me his rank, his bravery! How anxious he is about me! so entirely the man, the friend, the lover.

MOTHER. Do you expect him to-day?

CLARA. Have you not seen how often I go the window? Have you not noticed how I listen to every noise at the door? — Though I know that he will not come before night, yet, from the time when I rise in the morning, I keep expecting him every moment. Were I but a boy, to follow him always, to the court and everywhere! Could I but carry his colors in the field! —

MOTHER. You were always such a lively, restless creature; even as a little child, now wild, now thoughtful. Will you not dress yourself a little better?

CLARA. Perhaps, mother, if I have nothing better to do. — Yesterday, some of his people went by singing songs in his honor. At least his name was in the songs! The rest I could not understand. My heart leaped up into my throat, — I would fain have called them back if I had not felt ashamed.

MOTHER. Take care! Thy impetuous nature will ruin all. Thou wilt betray thyself before the people; as, not long ago, at thy cousin's, when thou foundest out the woodcut with the description, and didst exclaim, with a cry: "Count Egmont!" — I grew as red as fire.

CLARA. Could I help crying out? It was the battle of Gravelines, and I found in the picture the letter C. and then looked for it in the description below. There it stood, "Count Egmont, with his horse shot under him." I shuddered, and afterwards I could not help laughing at the woodcut figure of Egmont, as tall as the neighboring tower of Gravelines, and the English ships at the side. — When I remember how I used to conceive of a battle, and what an idea I had, as a girl, of Count Egmont; when I listened to descriptions of him, and of all the other earls and princes; — and think how it is with me now!

Enter BRACKENBURG.

CLARA. Well, what is going on?

BRACKENBURG. Nothing certain is known. It is rumored that an insurrection has lately broken out in Flanders; the Regent is afraid of its spreading here. The castle is strongly garrisoned, the burghers are crowding to the gates, and the streets are thronged with people. I will hasten at once to my old father. (*As if about to go.*)

CLARA. Shall we see you to-morrow? I must change my dress a little. I am expecting my cousin, and I look too untidy. Come, mother, help me a moment. Take the book, Brackenburg, and bring me such another story.

MOTHER. Farewell.

BRACKENBURG (*extending his hand*). Your hand!

CLARA (*refusing hers*). When you come next.

[*Exeunt* MOTHER and DAUGHTER.]

BRACKENBURG (*alone*). I had resolved to go away again at once; and yet, when she takes me at my word, and lets me leave her, I feel as if I could go mad. — Wretched man! Does the fate of thy fatherland, does the growing disturbance fail to move thee? — Are countryman and Spaniard the

same to thee? and carest thou not who rules, and who is in the right?—I was a different sort of fellow as a school-boy!—Then, when an exercise in oratory was given; “Brutus’ Speech for Liberty,” for instance, Fritz was ever the first, and the rector would say: “If it were only spoken more deliberately, the words not all huddled together.”—Then my blood boiled, and longed for action.—Now I drag along, bound by the eyes of a maiden. I cannot leave her! yet she, alas, cannot love me!—ah—no—she—she cannot have entirely rejected me—not entirely—yet half love is no love!—I will endure it no longer!—Can it be true what a friend lately whispered in my ear, that she secretly admits a man into the house by night, when she always sends me away modestly before evening? No, it cannot be true! It is a lie! A base, slanderous lie! Clara is as innocent as I am wretched.—She has rejected me, has thrust me from her heart—and shall I live on thus? I cannot, I will not endure it. Already my native land is convulsed by internal strife, and do I perish abjectly amid the tumult? I will not endure it! When the trumpet sounds, when a shot falls, it thrills through my bone and marrow! But, alas, it does not rouse me! It does not summon me to join the onslaught, to rescue, to dare.—Wretched, degrading position! Better end it at once! Not long ago I threw myself into the water; I sank—but nature in her agony was too strong for me; I felt that I could swim, and saved myself against my will. Could I but forget the time when she loved me, seemed to love me!—Why has this happiness penetrated my very bone and marrow? Why have these hopes, while disclosing to me a distant paradise, consumed all the enjoyment of life?—And that first, that only kiss!—Here (*laying his hand upon the table*), here we were alone,—she had always been kind and friendly towards me,—then she seemed to soften,—she looked at me,—my brain reeled,—I felt her lips on mine,—and—and now?—Die, wretch! Why dost thou hesitate? (*He draws a phial from his pocket.*) Thou healing poison, it shall not have been in vain that I stole thee from my brother’s medicine chest? From this anxious fear, this dizziness, this death-agony, thou shalt deliver me at once.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Square in Brussels.*

JETTER *and a MASTER CARPENTER (meeting).*

CARPENTER. Did I not tell you beforehand? Eight days ago at the guild I said there would be serious disturbances?

JETTER. Is it really true that they have plundered the churches in Flanders?

CARPENTER. They have utterly destroyed both churches and chapels. They have left nothing standing but the four bare walls. The lowest rabble! And this it is that damages our good cause. We ought rather to have laid our claims before the Regent, formally and decidedly, and then have stood by them. If we speak now, if we assemble now, it will be said that we are joining the insurgents.

JETTER. Ay, so every one thinks at first. Why should you thrust your nose into the mess? The neck is closely connected with it.

CARPENTER. I am always uneasy when tumults arise among the mob — among people who have nothing to lose. They use as a pretext that to which we also must appeal, and plunge the country in misery.

Enter SOEST.

SOEST. Good-day, sirs? What news? Is it true that the image-breakers are coming straight in this direction?

CARPENTER. Here they shall touch nothing at any rate.

SOEST. A soldier came into my shop just now to buy tobacco! I questioned him about the matter. The Regent, though so brave and prudent a lady, has for once lost her presence of mind. Things must be bad, indeed, when she thus takes refuge behind her guards. The castle is strongly garrisoned. It is even rumored that she means to flee from the town.

CARPENTER. Forth she shall not go! Her presence protects us, and we will insure her safety better than her mustachioed gentry. If she only maintains our rights and privileges, we will stand faithfully by her.

Enter a SOAPBOILER.

SOAPBOILER. An ugly business this! a bad business! Troubles are beginning; all things are going wrong! Mind you keep quiet, or they'll take you also for rioters.

SOEST. Here come the seven wise men of Greece.

SOAPBOILER. I know there are many who in secret hold with the Calvinists, abuse the bishops, and care not for the king. But a loyal subject, a sincere Catholic!— (*By degrees others join the speakers and listen.*)

Enter VANSSEN.

VANSSEN. God save you, sirs! What news?

CARPENTER. Have nothing to do with him, he's a dangerous fellow.

JETTER. Is he not secretary to Dr. Wiets?

CARPENTER. He has had several masters. First he was a clerk, and as one patron after another turned him off, on account of his roguish tricks, he now dabbles in the business of notary and advocate, and is a brandy-drinker to boot. (*More people gather round and stand in groups.*)

VANSSEN. So here you are putting your heads together. Well, it is worth talking about.

SOEST. I think so, too.

VANSSEN. Now, if only one of you had heart and another head enough for the work, we might break the Spanish fetters at once.

SOEST. Sirs! you must not talk thus. We have taken our oath to the king.

VANSSEN. And the king to us. Mark that!

JETTER. There's sense in that? Tell us your opinion.

OTHERS. Harken to him; he's a clever fellow. He's sharp enough.

VANSSEN. I had an old master once, who possessed a collection of parchments, among which were charters of ancient constitutions, contracts, and privileges. He set great store too, by the rarest books. One of these contained our whole constitution; how, at first we Netherlanders had princes of our own, who governed according to hereditary laws, rights, and usages; how our ancestors paid due honor to their sovereign so long as he governed them equitably; and how they were immediately on their guard the moment he was for overstepping his bounds. The states were down upon him at once; for every province, however small, had its own chamber and representatives.

CARPENTER. Hold your tongue! we knew that long ago! Every honest citizen learns as much about the constitution as he needs.

JETTER. Let him speak; one may always learn something.

SOEST. He is quite right.

SEVERAL CITIZENS. Go on! Go on! One does not hear this every day.

VANSEN. You, citizens, forsooth! You live only in the present; and as you tamely follow the trade inherited from your fathers, so you let the government do with you just as it pleases. You make no inquiry into the origin, the history, or the rights of a Regent; and, in consequence of this negligence, the Spaniard has drawn the net over your ears.

SOEST. Who cares for that, if one only has daily bread?

JETTER. The devil! Why did not some one come forward and tell us this in time?

VANSEN. I tell it you now. The King of Spain, whose good fortune it is to bear sway over these provinces, has no right to govern them otherwise than the petty princes who formerly possessed them separately. Do you understand that?

JETTER. Explain it to us.

VANSEN. Why it is as clear as the sun. Must you not be governed according to your provincial laws? How comes that?

A CITIZEN. Certainly!

VANSEN. Has not the burgher of Brussels a different law from the burgher of Antwerp? The burgher of Antwerp from the burgher of Ghent? How comes that?

ANOTHER CITIZEN. By heaven!

VANSEN. But if you let matters run on thus they will soon tell you a different story. Fie on you! Philip, through a woman, now ventures to do what neither Charles the Bold, Frederick the Warrior, nor Charles the Fifth could accomplish.

SOEST. Yes, yes! The old princes tried it also.

VANSEN. Ay! but our ancestors kept a sharp lookout. If they thought themselves aggrieved by their sovereign, they would perhaps get his son and heir into their hands, detain him as a hostage, and surrender him only on the most favorable conditions. Our fathers were men! They knew their own interests! They knew how to lay hold on what they wanted, and to get it established! They were men of the right sort; and hence it is that our privileges are so clearly defined, our liberties so well secured.

SOEST. What are you saying about our liberties?

ALL. Our liberties! our privileges! Tell us about our privileges.

VANSEN. All the provinces have their peculiar advantages, but we of Brabant are the most splendidly provided for. I have read it all.

SOEST. Say on.

JETTER. Let us hear.

A CITIZEN. Pray do.

VANSEN. First, it stands written:—The Duke of Brabant shall be to us a good and faithful sovereign.

SOEST. Good! Stands it so?

JETTER. Faithful? Is that true?

VANSEN. As I tell you. He is bound to us as we are to him. Secondly: in the exercise of his authority he shall neither exert arbitrary power nor exhibit caprice himself, nor shall he, either directly or indirectly, sanction them in others.

JETTER. Bravo! Bravo! Not exert arbitrary power.

SOEST. Nor exhibit caprice.

ANOTHER. And not sanction them in others! That is the main point. Not sanction them, either directly or indirectly.

VANSEN. In express words.

JETTER. Get us the book.

A CITIZEN. Yes, we must see it.

OTHERS. The book! The book!

ANOTHER. We will to the Regent with the book.

ANOTHER. Sir doctor, you shall be spokesman.

SOAPBOILER. Oh, the dolts!

OTHERS. Something more out of the book!

SOAPBOILER. I'll knock his teeth down his throat if he says another word.

PEOPLE. We'll see who dares to lay hands upon him. Tell us about our privileges! Have we any more privileges?

VANSEN. Many, very good and very wholesome ones, too. Thus it stands: The sovereign shall neither benefit the clergy, nor increase their number, without the consent of the nobles and of the states. Mark that! Nor shall he alter the constitution of the country.

SOEST. Stands it so?

VANSEN. I'll show it you, as it was written down two or three centuries ago.

A CITIZEN. And we tolerate the new bishop? The nobles must protect us, we will make a row else!

OTHERS. And we suffer ourselves to be intimidated by the Inquisition?

VANSEN. It is your own fault.

PEOPLE. We have Egmont! We have Orange! They will protect our interests.

VANSEN. Your brothers in Flanders are beginning the good work.

SOAPBOILER. Dog! (*Strikes him.*)

OTHERS *oppose the SOAPBOILER, and exclaim*, Are you also a Spaniard?

ANOTHER. What! This honorable man?

ANOTHER. This learned man?

(*They attack the SOAPBOILER.*)

CARPENTER. For heaven's sake, peace!

(*Others mingle in the fray.*)

CARPENTER. Citizens, what means this?

(*Boys whistle, throw stones, set on dogs; citizens stand and gape, people come running up, others walk quietly to and fro, others play all sorts of pranks, shout and huzza.*)

OTHERS. Freedom and privilege! Privilege and freedom!

Enter EGMONT, with followers

EGMONT. Peace! Peace! good people. What is the matter? Peace, I say! Separate them.

CARPENTER. My good lord, you come like an angel from heaven. Hush! See you nothing? Count Egmont! Honor to Count Egmont!

EGMONT. Here, too! What are you about? Burgher against burgher! Does not even the neighborhood of our royal mistress oppose a barrier to this frenzy? Disperse yourselves, and go about your business. 'Tis a bad sign when you thus keep holiday on working days. How did the disturbance begin?

(*The tumult gradually subsides, and the people gather around EGMONT.*)

CARPENTER. They are fighting about their privileges.

EGMONT. Which they will forfeit through their own folly — and who are you? You seem honest people.

CARPENTER. 'Tis our wish to be so.

EGMONT. Your calling?

CARPENTER. A carpenter, and master of the guild.

EGMONT. And you?

SOEST. A shopkeeper.

EGMONT. And you?

JETTER. A tailor.

EGMONT. I remember, you were employed upon the liveries of my people. Your name is Jetter.

JETTER. To think of your grace remembering it!

EGMONT. I do not easily forget any one whom I have seen or conversed with. Do what you can, good people, to keep the peace; you stand in bad enough repute already. Provoke not the king still farther. The power, after all, is in his hands. An honest burgher, who maintains himself industriously, has everywhere as much freedom as he needs.

CARPENTER. To be sure; that is just our misfortune! With all due deference, your grace, 'tis the idle portion of the community, your drunkards and vagabonds, who quarrel for want of something to do, and clamor about privilege because they are hungry; they impose upon the curious and the credulous, and, in order to obtain a pot of beer, excite disturbances that will bring misery upon thousands. That is just what they want. We keep our houses and chests too well guarded; they would fain drive us away from them with firebrands.

EGMONT. You shall have all needful assistance; measures have been taken to stem the evil by force. Make a firm stand against the new doctrines, and do not imagine that privileges are secured by sedition. Remain at home; suffer no crowds to assemble in the streets. Sensible people can accomplish much. (*In the meantime the crowd has for the most part dispersed.*)

CARPENTER. Thanks, your excellency — thanks for your good opinion! We will do what in us lies. (*Exit EGMONT.*) A gracious lord! A true Netherlander! Nothing of the Spaniard about him.

JETTER. If we had only him for a regent. 'Tis a pleasure to follow him.

SOEST. The king won't hear of that. He takes care to appoint his own people to the place.

JETTER. Did you notice his dress? It was of the newest fashion — after the Spanish cut.

CARPENTER. A handsome gentleman.

JETTER. His head now were a dainty morsel for a headsmen.

SOEST. Are you mad? What are you thinking about?

JETTER. It is stupid enough that such an idea should come into one's head! But so it is. Whenever I see a fine, long neck, I cannot help thinking how well it would suit the block. These cursed executions! One cannot get them out

of one's head. When the lads are swimming, and I chance to see a naked back, I think forthwith of the dozens I have seen beaten with rods. If I meet a portly gentleman, I fancy I already see him being roasted at the stake. At night, in my dreams, I am tortured in every limb; one cannot have a single hour's enjoyment; all merriment and fun have long been forgotten. These terrible images seem burnt in upon my brain.

SCENE II. EGMONT's residence.

His SECRETARY (at a desk with papers. He rises impatiently).

SECRETARY. He is not yet here! And I have been waiting already full two hours, pen in hand, the paper before me; and just to-day I am anxious to be off early. The floor burns under my feet. I can with difficulty restrain my impatience. "Be punctual to the hour." Such was his parting injunction; now he comes not. There is so much business to get through, I shall not have finished before midnight. He overlooks one's faults, it is true; methinks it would be better, though, were he more strict, so he dismissed one at the appointed time. One could then arrange one's plans. It is now full two hours since he came away from the Regent; who knows whom he may have chanced to meet by the way?

Enter EGMONT.

EGMONT. Well, how do matters look?

SECRETARY. I am ready, and three couriers are waiting.

EGMONT. I have detained you too long; you look somewhat out of humor.

SECRETARY. In obedience to your command I have been in attendance for some time. Here are the papers.

EGMONT. Donna Elvira will be angry with me when she learns that I have detained you.

SECRETARY. You are pleased to jest.

EGMONT. No, no. Be not ashamed. I admire your taste. She is pretty, and I have no objection that you should have a friend at the castle. What say the letters?

SECRETARY. Much, my lord, but withal little that is satisfactory.

EGMONT. 'Tis well that we have pleasures at home; we have the less occasion to seek them from abroad. Is there much that requires attention?

SECRETARY. Enough, my lord; three couriers are in attendance.

EGMONT. Proceed! The most important.

SECRETARY. All are important.

EGMONT. One after the other; only be prompt.

SECRETARY. Captain Breda sends an account of the occurrences that have further taken place in Ghent and the surrounding districts. The tumult is for the most part allayed.

EGMONT. He doubtless reports individual acts of folly and temerity?

SECRETARY. He does, my lord.

EGMONT. Spare me the recital.

SECRETARY. Six of the mob who tore down the image of the Virgin at Verviers have been arrested. He inquires whether they are to be hanged like the others.

EGMONT. I am weary of hanging; let them be flogged and discharged.

SECRETARY. There are two women; are they to be flogged also?

EGMONT. He may admonish them and let them go.

SECRETARY. Brink, of Breda's company, wants to marry; the captain hopes you will not allow it. There are so many women among the troops, he writes, that when on the march they resemble a gang of gypsies rather than regular soldiers.

EGMONT. We must overlook it in his case. He is a fine young fellow, and moreover entreated me so earnestly before I came away. This must be the last time, however; though it grieves me to refuse the poor fellows their best pastime; they have enough without that to torment them.

SECRETARY. Two of your people, Seter and Hart, have ill-treated a damsel, the daughter of an inn-keeper. They got her alone, and she could not escape from them.

EGMONT. If she be an honest maiden, and they used violence, let them be flogged three days in succession; and if they have any property, let him retain as much as will portion the girl.

SECRETARY. One of the foreign preachers has been discovered passing secretly through Comines. He swore that he was on the point of leaving for France. According to orders, he ought to be beheaded.

EGMONT. Let him be conducted quietly to the frontier, and there admonished that the next time he will not escape so easily.

SECRETARY. A letter from your steward. He writes that money comes in slowly; he can with difficulty send you the required sum within the week; the late disturbances have thrown everything into the greatest confusion.

EGMONT. Money must be had! It is for him to look to the means.

SECRETARY. He says he will do his utmost, and at length proposes to sue and imprison Raymond, who has been so long in your debt.

EGMONT. But he has promised to pay!

SECRETARY. The last time he fixed a fortnight himself.

EGMONT. Well, grant him another fortnight; after that he may proceed against him.

SECRETARY. You do well. His non-payment of the money proceeds not from inability, but from want of inclination. He will trifle no longer when he sees that you are in earnest. The steward further proposes to withhold, for half a month, the pensions which you allow to the old soldiers, widows, and others. In the meantime some expedient may be devised; they must make their arrangements accordingly.

EGMONT. But what arrangements can be made here? These poor people want the money more than I. He must not think of it.

SECRETARY. How then, my lord, is he to raise the required sum?

EGMONT. It is his business to think of that. He was told so in a former letter.

SECRETARY. And therefore he makes these proposals.

EGMONT. They will never do;—he must think of something else. Let him suggest expedients that are admissible, and, above all, let him procure the money.

SECRETARY. I have again before me the letter from Count Oliva. Pardon my recalling it to your remembrance. Above all others, the aged count deserves a detailed reply. You proposed writing to him with your own hand. Doubtless, he loves you as a father.

EGMONT. I cannot command the time;—and of all detestable things, writing is to me the most detestable. You imitate my hand so admirably, do you write in my name. I am expecting Orange. I cannot do it;—I wish, however, that something soothing should be written to allay his fears.

SECRETARY. Just give me a notion of what you wish to communicate; I will at once draw up the answer, and lay it

before you. It shall be so written that it might pass for your hand in a court of justice.

EGMONT. Give me the letter. (*After glancing over it.*) Good, honest, old man! Wert thou so cautious in thy own youth? Didst thou never mount a breach? Didst thou remain in the rear of battle at the suggestion of prudence? — What affectionate solicitude! He has, indeed, my safety and happiness at heart, but considers not that he who lives but to save his life is already dead. — Charge him not to be anxious on my account; I act as circumstances require, and shall be upon my guard. Let him use his influence at court in my favor, and be assured of my warmest thanks.

SECRETARY. Is that all? He expects still more.

EGMONT. What can I say? If you choose to write more fully, do so. The matter turns upon a single point; he would have me live as I cannot live. That I am joyous, live fast, take matters easily, is my good fortune; nor would I exchange it for the safety of a sepulchre. My blood rebels against the Spanish mode of life, nor have I the least inclination to regulate my movements by the new and cautious measures of the court. Do I live only to think of life? Am I to forego the enjoyment of the present moment in order to secure the next? And must that in its turn be consumed in anxieties and idle fears?

SECRETARY. I entreat you, my lord, be not so harsh towards the venerable man. You are wont to be friendly towards every one. Say a kindly word to allay the anxiety of your noble friend. See how considerate he is, with what delicacy he warns you.

EGMONT. Yet he harps continually on the same string. He knows of old how I detest these admonitions. They serve only to perplex and are of no avail. What if I were a somnambulist, and trod the giddy summit of a lofty house, — were it the part of friendship to call me by my name, to warn me of my danger, to waken, to kill me? Let each choose his own path, and provide for his own safety.

SECRETARY. It may become you to be without a fear, but those who know and love you —

EGMONT (*looking over the letter*). Then he recalls the old story of our sayings and doings one evening in the wantonness of conviviality and wine; and what conclusions and inferences were thence drawn and circulated throughout the whole kingdom! Well, we had a cap and bells embroidered on the sleeves of our servants' liveries, and afterwards

exchanged this senseless device for a bundle of arrows; — a still more dangerous symbol for those who are bent upon discovering a meaning where nothing is meant. These and similar follies were conceived and brought forth in a moment of merriment. It was at our suggestion that a noble troop, with beggars' wallets and a self-chosen nick-name, with mock humility recalled the king's duty to his remembrance. It was at our suggestion, too — well, what does it signify? Is a carnival jest to be construed into high treason? Are we to be grudged the scanty, variegated rags, wherewith a youthful spirit and heated imagination would adorn the poor nakedness of life? Take life too seriously, and what is it worth? If the morning wake us to no new joys, if in the evening we have no pleasures to hope for, is it worth the trouble of dressing and undressing? Does the sun shine on me to-day that I may reflect on what happened yesterday? That I may endeavor to foresee and control what can neither be foreseen nor controlled, — the destiny of the morrow? Spare me these reflections, we will leave them to scholars and courtiers. Let them ponder and contrive, creep hither and thither, and surreptitiously achieve their ends. — If you can make use of these suggestions, without swelling your letter into a volume, it is well. Everything appears of exaggerated importance to the good old man. 'Tis thus the friend, who has long held our hand, grasps it more warmly ere he quits his hold.

SECRETARY. Pardon me, the pedestrian grows dizzy when he beholds the charioteer drive past with whirling speed.

EGMONT. Child! Child! Forbear! As if goaded by invisible spirits, the sun-steeds of time bear onward the light car of our destiny; and nothing remains for us, but, with calm self-possession, firmly to grasp the reins, and now right, now left, to steer the wheels here from the precipice and there from the rock. Whither he is hasting, who knows? He hardly remembers whence he came?

SECRETARY. My lord! my lord!

EGMONT. I stand high, but I can and must rise yet higher. Courage, strength, and hope possess my soul. Not yet have I attained the height of my ambition; that once achieved, I want to stand firmly and without fear. Should I fall, should a thunder-clap, a storm-blast, ay, a false step of my own, precipitate me into the abyss, so be it! I shall lie there with thousands of others. I have

never disdained, even for a trifling stake, to throw the bloody die with my gallant comrades; and shall I hesitate now, when all that is most precious in life is set upon the cast?

SECRETARY. Oh, my lord! you know not what you say! May Heaven protect you!

EGMONT. Collect your papers. Orange is coming. Despatch what is most urgent, that the couriers may set forth before the gates are closed. The rest may wait. Leave the Count's letter till to-morrow. Fail not to visit Elvira, and greet her from me. Inform yourself concerning the Regent's health. She cannot be well, though she would fain conceal it.

[Exit SECRETARY.]

Enter ORANGE.

EGMONT. Welcome, Orange; you appear somewhat disturbed.

ORANGE. What say you to our conference with the Regent?

EGMONT. I found nothing extraordinary in her manner of receiving us. I have often seen her thus before. She appeared to me to be somewhat indisposed.

ORANGE. Marked you not that she was more reserved than usual? She began by cautiously approving our conduct during the late insurrection; glanced at the false light in which, nevertheless, it might be viewed; and finally turned the discourse to her favorite topic—that her gracious demeanor, her friendship for us Netherlanders, had never been sufficiently recognized, never appreciated as it deserved; that nothing came to a prosperous issue; that for her part she was beginning to grow weary of it; that the king must at last resolve upon other measures. Did you hear that?

EGMONT. Not all; I was thinking at the time of something else. She is a woman, good Orange, and all women expect that every one shall submit passively to their gentle yoke; that every Hercules shall lay aside his lion's skin, assume the distaff, and swell their train; and, because they are themselves peaceably inclined, imagine, forsooth, that the ferment which seizes a nation, the storm which powerful rivals excite against one another, may be allayed by one soothing word, and the most discordant elements be brought to unite in tranquil harmony at their feet. 'Tis thus with her; and since she cannot accomplish her object, why she

has no resource left but to lose her temper, to menace us with direful prospects for the future, and to threaten to take her departure.

ORANGE. Think you not that this time she will fulfil her threat?

EGMONT. Never! How often have I seen her actually prepared for the journey? Whither should she go? Being here a stadtholder, a queen, think you that she could endure to spend her days in insignificance at her brother's court, or to repair to Italy, and there drag on her existence among her old family connections?

ORANGE. She is held incapable of this determination, because you have already seen her hesitate and draw back; nevertheless, it is in her to take this step; new circumstances may impel her to the long-delayed resolve. What if she were to depart, and the king to send another?

EGMONT. Why, he would come, and he also would have business enough upon his hands. He would arrive with vast projects and schemes to reduce all things to order, to subjugate, and combine; and to-day he would be occupied with this trifle, to-morrow with that, and the day following have to deal with some unexpected hinderance. He would spend one month in forming plans, another in mortification at their failure, and half a year would be consumed in cares for a single province. With him also time would pass, his head grow dizzy, and things hold on their ordinary course, till, instead of sailing into the open sea, according to the plan which he had previously marked out, he might thank God if, amid the tempest, he were able to keep his vessel off the rocks.

ORANGE. What if the king were advised to try an experiment?

EGMONT. Which should be ——?

ORANGE. To try how the body would get on without the head.

EGMONT. What?

ORANGE. Egmont, our interests have for years weighed upon my heart; I ever stand as over a chess-board, and regard no move of my adversary as insignificant; and as men of science carefully investigate the secrets of nature, so I hold it to be the duty, ay, the very vocation of a prince, to acquaint himself with the dispositions and intentions of all parties. I have reason to fear an outbreak. The king has long acted according to certain principles; he finds that

they do not lead to a prosperous issue; what more probable than that he should seek it some other way?

EGMONT. I do not believe it! When a man grows old, has attempted much, and finds that the world cannot be made to move according to his will, he must needs grow weary of it at last.

ORANGE. One thing he has not yet attempted.

EGMONT. What?

ORANGE. To spare the people, and to put an end to the princes.

EGMONT. How many have long been haunted by this dread? There is no cause for such anxiety.

ORANGE. Once I felt anxious; gradually I became suspicious; suspicion has at length grown into certainty.

EGMONT. Has the king more faithful servants than ourselves?

ORANGE. We serve him after our own fashion; and, between ourselves, it must be confessed that we understand pretty well how to make the interests of the king square with our own.

EGMONT. And who does not? He has our duty and submission in so far as they are his due.

ORANGE. But what if he should arrogate still more, and regard as disloyalty what we esteem the maintenance of our just rights?

EGMONT. We shall know in that case how to defend ourselves. Let him assemble the Knights of the Golden Fleece; we will submit ourselves to their decision.

ORANGE. What if the sentence were to precede the trial? punishment the sentence?

EGMONT. It were an injustice of which Philip is incapable; a folly which I cannot impute either to him or to his counsellors.

ORANGE. And what if they were both unjust and foolish?

EGMONT. No, Orange, it is impossible. Who would venture to lay hands on us? The attempt to capture us were a vain and fruitless enterprise. No, they dare not raise the standard of tyranny so high. The breeze that should waft these tidings over the land would kindle a mighty conflagration. And what object would they have in view? The king alone has no power either to judge or to condemn us; and would they attempt our lives by assassination? They cannot intend it. A terrible league

would unite the entire people. Direful hate and eternal separation from the crown of Spain would, on the instant, be forcibly declared.

ORANGE. The flames would then rage over our grave, and the blood of our enemies flow, a vain oblation. Let us consider, Egmont.

EGMONT. But how could they effect this purpose?

ORANGE. Alva is on the way.

EGMONT. I do not believe it.

ORANGE. I know it.

EGMONT. The Regent appeared to know nothing of it.

ORANGE. And, therefore, the stronger is my conviction. The Regent will give place to him. I know his bloodthirsty disposition, and he brings an army with him.

EGMONT. To harass the provinces anew? The people will be exasperated to the last degree.

ORANGE. Their leaders will be secured.

EGMONT. No! No!

ORANGE. Let us retire, each to his province. There we can strengthen ourselves; the duke will not begin with open violence.

EGMONT. Must we not greet him when he comes?

ORANGE. We will delay.

EGMONT. What if, on his arrival, he should summon us in the king's name?

ORANGE. We will answer evasively.

EGMONT. And if he is urgent?

ORANGE. We will excuse ourselves.

EGMONT. If he insist?

ORANGE. We shall be the less disposed to come.

EGMONT. Then war is declared; and we are rebels. Do not suffer prudence to mislead you, Orange. I know it is not fear that makes you yield. Consider this step.

ORANGE. I have considered it.

EGMONT. Consider for what you are answerable if you are wrong. For the most fatal war that ever yet desolated a country. Your refusal is the signal that at once summons the provinces to arms, that justifies every cruelty for which Spain has hitherto so anxiously sought a pretext. With a single nod you will excite to the direst confusion what, with patient effort, we have so long kept in abeyance. Think of the towns, the nobles, the people; think of commerce, agriculture, trade! Realize the murder, the desolation! Calmly the soldier beholds his comrade fall beside him in the battle-

field. But towards you, carried down by the stream, will float the corpses of citizens, of children, of maidens, till, aghast with horror, you shall no longer know whose cause you are defending, since you will see those for whose liberty you drew the sword perish around you. And what will be your emotions when conscience whispers, "It was for my own safety that I drew it?"

ORANGE. We are not ordinary men, Egmont. If it becomes us to sacrifice ourselves for thousands, it becomes us no less to spare ourselves for thousands.

EGMONT. He who spares himself becomes an object of suspicion even to himself.

ORANGE. He who is sure of his own motives can with confidence advance or retreat.

EGMONT. Your own act will render certain the evil that you dread.

ORANGE. Wisdom and courage alike prompt us to meet an inevitable evil.

EGMONT. When the danger is imminent the faintest hope should be taken into account.

ORANGE. We have not the smallest footing left; we are on the very brink of the precipice.

EGMONT. Is the king's favor on ground so narrow?

ORANGE. Not narrow, perhaps, but slippery.

EGMONT. By heavens! he is belied. I cannot endure that he should be so meanly thought of! He is Charles' son, and incapable of meanness.

ORANGE. Kings of course do nothing mean.

EGMONT. He should be better known.

ORANGE. Our knowledge counsels us not to wait the result of a dangerous experiment.

EGMONT. No experiment is dangerous the result of which we have the courage to meet.

ORANGE. You are irritated, Egmont.

EGMONT. I must see with my own eyes.

ORANGE. Oh, that for once you saw with mine! My friend, because your eyes are open you imagine that you see. I go! Await Alva's arrival, and God be with you! My refusal to do so may perhaps save you. The dragon may deem the prey not worth seizing if he cannot swallow us both. Perhaps he may delay in order more surely to execute his purpose; in the meantime you may see matters in their true light. But, then, be prompt! Lose not a moment! Save, — oh, save yourself! Farewell! — Let

nothing escape your vigilance : — how many troops he brings with him ; how he garrisons the town ; what force the Regent retains ; how your friends are prepared. Send me tidings — Egmont —

EGMONT. What would you ?

ORANGE (*grasping his hand*). Be persuaded ! Go with me !

EGMONT. What ? Tears, Orange ?

ORANGE. To weep for a lost friend is not unmanly.

EGMONT. You deem me lost ?

ORANGE. You are lost ! Consider ! Only a brief respite is left you. Farewell. [*Exit.*]

EGMONT. Strange that the thoughts of other men should exert such an influence over us. These fears would never have entered my mind ; and this man infects me with his solicitude. Away ! 'Tis a foreign drop in my blood ! Kind nature cast it forth ! And to erase the furrowed lines from my brow there yet remains, indeed, a friendly means.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Palace of the Regent.*

MARGARET OF PARMA.

REGENT. I might have expected it. Ha ! when we live immersed in anxiety and toil we imagine that we achieve the utmost that is possible ; while he, who, from a distance, looks on and commands, believes that he requires only the possible. Oh, ye kings ! I had not thought it could have galled me thus. It is so sweet to reign ! — and to abdicate ? I know not how my father could do so ; but I will also.

MACHIAVEL *appears in the background.*

REGENT. Approach, Machiavel. I am pondering over my brother's letter.

MACHIAVEL. May I know what it contains ?

REGENT. As much tender consideration for me as anxiety for his states. He extols the firmness, the industry, the fidelity, with which I have hitherto watched over the interests of his majesty in these provinces. He condoles with me that the unbridled people occasion me so much trouble.

He is so thoroughly convinced of the depth of my views, so extraordinarily satisfied with the prudence of my conduct, that I must almost say the letter is too politely written for a king — certainly for a brother.

MACHIAVEL. It is not the first time that he has testified to you his just satisfaction.

REGENT. But the first time that it is a mere rhetorical figure.

MACHIAVEL. I do not understand you.

REGENT. You soon will. For after this preamble he is of opinion that without soldiers, without a small army, indeed, I shall always cut a sorry figure here! We did wrong, he says, to withdraw our troops from the provinces at the remonstrance of the inhabitants; a garrison, he thinks, which shall press upon the neck of the burgher, will prevent him, by its weight, from making any lofty spring.

MACHIAVEL. It would irritate the public mind to the last degree.

REGENT. The king thinks, however, do you hear? — he thinks that a clever general, one who never listens to reason, will be able to deal promptly with all parties; — people and nobles, citizens and peasants; he therefore sends, with a powerful army, the Duke of Alva.

MACHIAVEL. Alva?

REGENT. You are surprised.

MACHIAVEL. You say he sends, he asks, doubtless, whether he should send.

REGENT. The king asks not, he sends.

MACHIAVEL. You will then have an experienced warrior in your service.

REGENT. In my service? Speak your mind, Machiavel.

MACHIAVEL. I would not anticipate you.

REGENT. And I would I could dissimulate. It wounds me — wounds me to the quick. I had rather my brother would speak his mind than attach his signature to formal epistles drawn up by a secretary of state.

MACHIAVEL. Can they not comprehend?

REGENT. I know them both within and without. They would fain make a clean sweep; and since they cannot set about it themselves, they give their confidence to any one who comes with a besom in his hand. Oh, it seems to me as if I saw the king and his council worked upon this tapestry.

MACHIAVEL. So distinctly!

REGENT. No feature is wanting. There are good men among them. The honest Roderigo, so experienced and so moderate, who does not aim too high, yet lets nothing sink too low; the upright Alonzo, the diligent Freneda, the steadfast Las Vargas, and others who join them when the good party are in power. But there sits the hollow-eyed Tolendan, with brazen front and deep fire-glance, muttering between his teeth about womanish softness, ill-timed concession, and that women can ride trained steeds well enough, but are themselves bad masters of the horse, and the like pleasantries, which in former times I have been compelled to hear from political gentlemen.

MACHIAVEL. You have chosen good colors for your picture.

REGENT. Confess, Machiavel, among the tints from which I might select, there is no hue so livid, so jaundice-like as Alva's complexion, and the color he is wont to paint with. He regards every one as a blasphemer or traitor; for under this head they can all be racked, impaled, quartered, and burnt at pleasure. The good I have accomplished here appears as nothing seen from a distance, just because it is good. Then he dwells on every outbreak that is past, recalls every disturbance that is quieted, and brings before the king such a picture of mutiny, sedition, and audacity, that we appear to him to be actually devouring one another, when with us the transient explosion of a rude people has been long forgotten. Thus he conceives a cordial hatred for the poor people; he views them with horror, as beasts and monsters; looks around for fire and sword, and imagines that by such means human beings are subdued.

MACHIAVEL. You appear to me too vehement; you take the matter too seriously. Do you not remain Regent?

REGENT. I am aware of that. He will bring his instructions. I am old enough in state affairs to understand how people can be supplanted without being actually deprived of office. First, he will produce a commission couched in terms somewhat obscure and equivocal; he will stretch his authority, for the power is in his hands; if I complain, he will hint at secret instructions; if I desire to see them, he will answer evasively; if I insist, he will produce a paper of totally different import; and if this fail to satisfy me, he will go on precisely as if I had never interfered. Meanwhile he will have accomplished what I dread, and will have frustrated my most cherished schemes.

MACHIAVEL. I wish I could contradict you.

REGENT. His harshness and cruelty will again arouse the turbulent spirit, which, with unspeakable patience, I have succeeded in quelling; I shall see my work destroyed before my eyes, and have besides to bear the blame of his wrong-doing.

MACHIAVEL. Await it, your highness.

REGENT. I have sufficient self-command to remain quiet. Let him come; I will make way for him with the best grace ere he pushes me aside.

MACHIAVEL. So important a step thus suddenly?

REGENT. 'Tis harder than you imagine. He who is accustomed to rule, to hold daily in his hand the destiny of thousands, descends from the throne as into the grave. Better thus, however, than linger a spectre among the living, and with hollow aspect endeavor to maintain a place which another has inherited, and already possesses and enjoys.

SCENE II. CLARA'S *dwelling*

CLARA and her MOTHER.

MOTHER. Such a love as Brackenburg's I have never seen; I thought it was to be found only in romance books.

CLARA (*walking up and down the room, humming a song*).

With love's thrilling rapture
What joy can compare!

MOTHER. He suspects thy intercourse with Egmont; and yet, if thou wouldst but treat him somewhat kindly, I do believe he would marry thee still, if thou wouldst have him.

CLARA (*sings*).

Blissful
And tearful,
With thought-teeming brain;
Hoping
And fearing
In wavering pain;
Now shouting in triumph,
Now sunk in despair;—
With love's thrilling rapture
What joy can compare!

MOTHER. Have done with such baby nonsense!

CLARA. Nay, do not abuse it; 'tis a song of marvellous virtue. Many a time have I lulled a grown child to sleep with it.

MOTHER. Ay! Thou canst think of nothing but thy love. If only it did not put everything else out of thy head. Thou shouldst have more regard for Brackenburg, I tell thee. He may make thee happy yet some day.

CLARA. He?

MOTHER. Oh, yes! A time will come! You children live only in the present, and give no ear to our experience. Youth and happy love, all has an end; and there comes a time when one thanks God if one has any corner to creep into.

CLARA (*shudders, and after a pause starts up*). Mother, let that time come — like death. To think of it beforehand is horrible! And if it come! If we must — then — we will bear ourselves as we may. Live without thee, Egmont! (*Weeping.*) No! It is impossible.

Enter EGMONT (enveloped in a horseman's cloak, his hat drawn over his face).

EGMONT. Clara!

CLARA (*utters a cry and starts back*). Egmont! (*She hastens towards him.*) Egmont! (*She embraces and leans upon him.*) O thou good, kind, sweet Egmont! Art thou come? Art thou here, indeed!

EGMONT. Good evening, mother?

MOTHER. God save you, noble sir! My daughter has well-nigh pined to death because you have stayed away so long; she talks and sings about you the livelong day.

EGMONT. You will give me some supper?

MOTHER. You do us too much honor. If we only had anything —

CLARA. Certainly! Be quiet, mother; I have provided everything; there is something prepared. Do not betray me, mother.

MOTHER. There's little enough.

CLARA. Never mind! And then I think when he is with me I am never hungry; so he cannot, I should think, have any great appetite when I am with him.

EGMONT. Do you think so? (*CLARA stamps with her foot and turns pettishly away.*) What ails you?

CLARA. How cold you are to-day! You have not yet offered me a kiss. Why do you keep your arms enveloped in your mantle, like a new-born babe? It becomes neither a soldier nor a lover to keep his arms muffled up.

EGMONT. Sometimes, dearest, sometimes. When the sol-

dier stands in ambush and would delude the foe, he collects his thoughts, gathers his mantle around him, and matures his plan; and a lover ——

MOTHER. Will you not take a seat and make yourself comfortable? I must to the kitchen, Clara thinks of nothing when you are here. You must put up with what we have.

EGMONT. Your good-will is the best seasoning.

[*Exit* MOTHER.]

CLARA. And what then is my love?

EGMONT. Just what thou wilt.

CLARA. Liken it to anything, if you have the heart.

EGMONT. But first. (*He flings aside his mantle, and appears arrayed in a magnificent dress.*)

CLARA. Oh, heavens!

EGMONT. Now my arms are free! (*Embraces her.*)

CLARA. Don't! You will spoil your dress. (*She steps back.*) How magnificent! I dare not touch you.

EGMONT. Art thou satisfied! I promised to come once arrayed in Spanish fashion.

CLARA. I had ceased to remind you of it; I thought you did not like it — ah, and the Golden Fleece!

EGMONT. Thou seest it now.

CLARA. And did the emperor really hang it round thy neck!

EGMONT. He did, my child! And this chain and Order invest the wearer with the noblest privileges. On earth I acknowledge no judge over my actions, except the grand master of the Order, with the assembled chapter of knights.

CLARA. Oh, thou mightest let the whole world sit in judgment over thee. The velvet is too splendid! and the braiding! and the embroidery! One knows not where to begin.

EGMONT. There, look thy fill.

CLARA. And the Golden Fleece! You told me its history, and said it is the symbol of everything great and precious, of everything that can be merited and won by diligence and toil. It is very precious — I may liken it to thy love; — even so I wear it next my heart; — and then —

EGMONT. What wilt thou say?

CLARA. And then again it is not like.

EGMONT. How so?

CLARA. I have not won it by diligence and toil, I have not deserved it.

EGMONT. It is otherwise in love. Thou dost deserve it because thou hast not sought it — and, for the most part, those only obtain who seek it not.

CLARA. Is it from thine own experience that thou hast learned this? Didst thou make that proud remark in reference to thyself? Thou, whom all the people love?

EGMONT. Would that I had done something for them! That I could do anything for them! It is their own good pleasure to love.

CLARA. Thou hast doubtless been with the Regent to-day?

EGMONT. I have.

CLARA. Art thou upon good terms with her?

EGMONT. So it would appear. We are kind and serviceable to each other.

CLARA. And in thy heart?

EGMONT. I like her. True, we have each our own views; but that is nothing to the purpose. She is an excellent woman, knows with whom she has to deal, and would be penetrating enough were she not quite so suspicious. I give her plenty of employment, because she is always suspecting some secret motive in my conduct when, in fact, I have none.

CLARA. Really none?

EGMONT. Well, with one little exception, perhaps. All wine deposits lees in the cask in the course of time. Orange furnishes her still better entertainment, and is a perpetual riddle. He has got the credit of harboring some secret design; and she studies his brow to discover his thoughts, and his steps, to learn in what direction they are bent.

CLARA. Does she dissemble?

EGMONT. She is Regent — and do you ask?

CLARA. Pardon me; I meant to say, is she false?

EGMONT. Neither more nor less than every one who has his own objects to attain.

CLARA. I should never feel at home in the world. But she has a masculine spirit, and is another sort of woman than we housewives and seamstresses. She is great, steadfast, resolute.

EGMONT. Yes, when matters are not too much involved. For once, however, she is a little disconcerted.

CLARA. How is that?

EGMONT. She has a moustache, too, on her upper lip, and occasionally an attack of the gout. A regular Amazon.

CLARA. A majestic woman! I should dread to appear before her.

EGMONT. Yet thou art not wont to be timid! It would not be fear, only maidenly bashfulness.

(CLARA casts down her eyes, takes his hand, and leans upon him.)

EGMONT. I understand thee, dearest! Thou mayest raise thine eyes. (He kisses her eyes.)

CLARA. Let me be silent! Let me embrace thee! Let me look into thine eyes, and find there everything—hope and comfort, joy and sorrow! (She embraces and gazes on him.) Tell me! Oh, tell me! It seems so strange—art thou, indeed, Egmont! Count Egmont! The great Egmont, who makes so much noise in the world, who figures in the newspapers, who is the support and stay of the provinces?

EGMONT. No, Clara, I am not he.

CLARA. How?

EGMONT. Seest thou, Clara! Let me sit down! (He seats himself, she kneels on a footstool before him, rests her arms on his knees, and looks up in his face.) That Egmont is a morose, cold, unbending Egmont, obliged to be upon his guard, to assume now this appearance and now that; harassed, misapprehended and perplexed, when the crowd esteem him light-hearted and gay; beloved by a people who do not know their own mind; honored and extolled by the intractable multitude; surrounded by friends in whom he dares not confide; observed by men who are on the watch to supplant him; toiling and striving, often without an object, generally without a reward. O let me conceal how it fares with him, let me not speak of his feelings! But this Egmont, Clara, is calm, unreserved, happy, beloved and known by the best of hearts, which is also thoroughly known to him, and which he presses to his own with unbounded confidence and love. (He embraces her.) This is thy Egmont.

CLARA. So let me die! The world has no joy after this!

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Street.*

JETTER, CARPENTER.

JETTER. Hist! neighbor, — a word!

CARPENTER. Go your way and be quiet.

JETTER. Only one word. Is there nothing new?

CARPENTER. Nothing, except that we are anew forbidden to speak.

JETTER. How?

CARPENTER. Step here, close to this house. Take heed! Immediately on his arrival, the Duke of Alva published a decree, by which two or three, found conversing together in the streets, are, without trial, declared guilty of high treason.

JETTER. Alas!

CARPENTER. To speak of state affairs is prohibited on pain of perpetual imprisonment.

JETTER. Alas for our liberty!

CARPENTER. And no one, on pain of death, shall censure the measures of government.

JETTER. Alas for our heads!

CARPENTER. And fathers, mothers, children, kindred, friends, and servants are invited, by the promise of large rewards, to disclose what passes in the privacy of our homes, before an expressly appointed tribunal.

JETTER. Let us go home.

CARPENTER. And the obedient are promised that they shall suffer no injury either in person or estate.

JETTER. How gracious! — I felt ill at ease the moment the duke entered the town. Since then it has seemed to me as though the heavens were covered with black crape, which hangs so low that one must stoop down to avoid knocking one's head against it.

CARPENTER. And how do you like his soldiers? They are a different sort of crabs from those we have been used to.

JETTER. Faugh! It gives one the cramp at one's heart to see such a troop march down the street. As straight as tapers, with fixed look, only one step, however many there may be; and when they stand sentinel, and you pass one of them, it seems as though he would look you through and through; and he looks so stiff and morose that you fancy

you see a task-master at every corner. They offend my sight. Our militia were merry fellows; they took liberties, stood their legs astride, their hats over their ears, they lived and let live! these fellows are like machines with a devil inside them.

CARPENTER. Were such an one to cry "Halt!" and to level his musket, think you one would stand?

JETTER. I should fall dead upon the spot.

CARPENTER. Let us go home!

JETTER. No good can come of it. Farewell.

Enter SOEST.

SOEST. Friends! Neighbors!

CARPENTER. Hush! Let us go.

SOEST. Have you heard?

JETTER. Only too much!

SOEST. The Regent is gone.

JETTER. Then Heaven help us.

CARPENTER. She was some stay to us.

SOEST. Her departure was sudden and secret. She could not agree with the duke; she has sent word to the nobles that she intends to return. No one believes it, however.

CARPENTER. God pardon the nobles for letting this new yoke be laid upon our necks. They might have prevented it. Our privileges are gone.

JETTER. For Heaven's sake not a word about privileges. I already scent an execution; the sun will not come forth; the fogs are rank.

SOEST. Orange, too, is gone.

CARPENTER. Then are we quite deserted

SOEST. Count Egmont is still here.

JETTER. God be thanked! Strengthen him, all ye saints, to do his utmost; he is the only one who can help us.

Enter VANSSEN.

VANSSEN. Have I at length found a few, brave citizens who have not crept out of sight?

JETTER. Do us the favor to pass on.

VANSSEN. You are not civil.

JETTER. This is no time for compliments. Does your back itch again? are your wounds already healed?

VANSSEN. Ask a soldier about his wounds! Had I cared for blows, nothing good would have come of me.

JETTER. Matters may grow more serious.

VANSEN. You feel from the gathering storm a pitiful weakness in your limbs it seems.

CARPENTER. Your limbs will soon be in motion elsewhere if you do not keep quiet.

VANSEN. Poor mice! The master of the house procures a new cat, and ye are straight in despair! The difference is very trifling; we shall get on as we did before, only be quiet.

CARPENTER. You are an insolent knave.

VANSEN. Gossip! Let the duke alone. The old cat looks as though he had swallowed devils instead of mice, and could not now digest them. Let him alone, I say; he must eat, drink, and sleep like other men. I am not afraid if we only watch our opportunity. At first he makes quick work of it; by-and-by, however, he too will find that it is pleasanter to live in the larder, among fitches of bacon, and to rest by night, than to entrap a few solitary mice in the granary. Go to! I know the stadtholders.

CARPENTER. What such a fellow can say with impunity! Had I said such a thing I should not hold myself safe a moment.

VANSEN. Do not make yourselves uneasy! God in heaven does not trouble himself about you poor worms, much less the Regent.

JETTER. Slanderer!

VANSEN. I know some for whom it would be better if, instead of their own high spirits, they had a little tailor's blood in their veins.

CARPENTER. What means you by that?

VANSEN. Hum! I mean the count.

JETTER. Egmont! What has he to fear?

VANSEN. I'm a poor devil, and could live a whole year round on what he loses in a single night; yet he would do well to give me his revenue for a twelvemonth, to have my head upon his shoulders for one quarter of an hour.

JETTER. You think yourself very clever; yet there is more sense in the hairs of Egmont's head than in your brains.

VANSEN. Perhaps so! Not more shrewdness, however. These gentry are the most apt to deceive themselves. He should be more chary of his confidence.

JETTER. How his tongue wags! Such a gentleman!

VANSEN. Just because he is not a tailor.

JETTER. You audacious scoundrel!

VANSEN. I only wish he had your courage in his limbs for an hour to make him uneasy, and plague and torment him till he were compelled to leave the town.

JETTER. What nonsense you talk; why he's as safe as a star in heaven.

VANSEN. Have you ever seen one snuff itself out? Off it went!

CARPENTER. Who would dare to meddle with him?

VANSEN. Will you interfere to prevent it? Will you stir up an insurrection if he is arrested?

JETTER. Ah!

VANSEN. Will you risk your ribs for his sake?

SOEST. Eh!

VANSEN (*mimicking them*). Eh! Oh! Ah! Run through the alphabet in your wonderment. So it is, and so it will remain. Heaven help him!

JETTER. Confound your impudence. Can such a noble, upright man have anything to fear?

VANSEN. In this world the rogue has everywhere the advantage. At the bar, he makes a fool of the judge; on the bench, he takes pleasure in convicting the accused. I have had to copy out a protocol, where the commissary was handsomely rewarded by the court, both with praise and money, because, through his cross-examination, an honest devil, against whom they had a grudge, was made out to be a rogue.

CARPENTER. Why, that again is a downright lie. What can they want to get out of a man if he is innocent?

VANSEN. Oh, you blockhead! When nothing can be worked out of a man by cross-examination they work it into him. Honesty is rash and withal somewhat presumptuous; at first they question quietly enough, and the prisoner, proud of his innocence, as they call it, comes out with much that a sensible man would keep back; then, from these answers the inquisitor proceeds to put new questions, and is on the watch for the slightest contradictions; there he fastens his line; and, let the poor devil lose his self-possession, say too much here or too little there, or, Heaven knows from what whim or other, let him withhold some trifling circumstance, or at any moment give way to fear—then we're on the right track, and I assure you no beggar-woman seeks for rags among the rubbish with more care than such a fabricator of rogues, from trifling, crooked.

jointed, misplaced, misprinted, and concealed facts and information, acknowledged or denied, endeavors at length to patch up a scare-crow, by means of which he may at least hang his victim in effigy: and the poor devil may thank Heaven if he is in a condition to see himself hanged.

JETTER. He has a ready tongue of his own.

CARPENTER. This may serve well enough with flies. Wasps laugh at your cunning web.

VANSEN. According to the kind of spider. The tall duke, now, has just the look of your garden-spider; not the large-bellied kind—they are less dangerous; but your long-footed, meagre-bodied gentleman, that does not fatten on his diet, and whose threads are slender, indeed, but not the less tenacious.

JETTER. Egmont is knight of the Golden Fleece; who dares lay hands on him? He can be tried only by his peers, by the assembled knights of his Order. Your own foul tongue and evil conscience betray you into this nonsense.

VANSEN. Think you that I wish him ill? I like it well enough. He is an excellent gentleman. He once let off with a sound drubbing some good friends of mine who would else have been hanged. Now take yourselves off! begone, I advise you! Yonder I see the patrol again commencing their round. They do not look as if they would be willing to fraternize with us over a glass. We must wait, and bide our time. I have a couple of nieces and a tapster; if after enjoying themselves in their company, they are not tamed, they are regular wolves.

SCENE II. *The Palace of Eulenberg, Residence of the DUKE OF ALVA.*

SILVA and GOMEZ (*meeting*).

SILVA. Have you executed the duke's commands?

GOMEZ. Punctually. All the day-patrols have received orders to assemble at the appointed time, at the various points that I have indicated. Meanwhile, they march as usual through the town to maintain order. Each is ignorant respecting the movements of the rest, and imagines the command to have reference to himself alone; thus in a moment the cordon can be formed, and all the avenues to the palace occupied. Know you the reason of this command?

SILVA. I am accustomed blindly to obey; and to whom

can one more easily render obedience than to the duke, since the event always proves the wisdom of his commands?

GOMEZ. Well! Well! I am not surprised that you are become as reserved and monosyllabic as the duke, since you are obliged to be always about his person; to me, however, who am accustomed to the lighter service of Italy, it seems strange enough. In loyalty and obedience, I am the same old sailor as ever; but I am wont to indulge in gossip and discussion; here you are all silent, and seem as though you knew not how to enjoy yourselves. The duke, methinks, is like a brazen tower without gates, the garrison of which must be furnished with wings. Not long ago I heard him say at the table of a gay, jovial fellow that he was like a bad spirit-shop, with a brandy sign displayed, to allure idlers, vagabonds, and thieves.

SILVA. And has he not brought us hither in silence?

GOMEZ. Nothing can be said against that. Of a truth, we, who witnessed the address with which he lead the troops hither out of Italy, have seen something. How he advanced warily through friends and foes; through the French, both royalists and heretics; through the Swiss and their confederates; maintained the strictest discipline, and accomplished with ease, and without the slightest hinderance, a march that that was esteemed so perilous! — We have seen and learned something.

SILVA. Here, too! Is not everything as still and quiet as though there had been no disturbance?

GOMEZ. Why, as for that, it was tolerably quiet when we arrived.

SILVA. The provinces have become much more tranquil; if there is any movement now it is only among those who wish to escape; and to them, methinks, the duke will speedily close every outlet.

GOMEZ. This service cannot fail to win for him the favor of the king.

SILVA. And nothing is more expedient for us than to retain his. Should the king come hither, the duke doubtless and all whom he recommends will not go without their reward.

GOMEZ. Do you really believe then that the king will come?

SILVA. So many preparations are made that the report appears highly probable.

GOMEZ. I am not convinced, however.

SILVA. Keep your thoughts to yourself then. For if it should not be the king's intention to come it is at least certain that he wishes the rumor to be believed.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. Is my father not yet abroad?

SILVA. We are waiting to receive his commands.

FERDINAND. The princes will soon be here.

GOMEZ. Are they expected to-day?

FERDINAND. Orange and Egmont.

GOMEZ (*aside to SILVA*). A light breaks in upon me.

SILVA. Well, then, say nothing about it.

Enter the DUKE OF ALVA (as he advances the rest draw back).

ALVA. Gomez.

GOMEZ (*steps forward*). My lord.

ALVA. You have distributed the guards and given them your instructions?

GOMEZ. Most accurately. The day-patrols —

ALVA. Enough. Attend in the gallery. Silva will announce to you the moment when you are to draw them together, and to occupy the avenues leading to the palace. The rest you know.

GOMEZ. I do, my lord.

[*Exit.*

ALVA. Silva.

SILVA. Here, my lord.

ALVA. I shall require you to manifest to-day all the qualities I have hitherto prized in you: courage, resolve, unswerving execution.

SILVA. I thank you for the opportunity of showing that your old servant is unchanged.

ALVA. The moment the princes enter my cabinet hasten to arrest Egmont's private secretary. You have made all needful preparations for securing the others who are specified?

SILVA. Rely upon us. Their doom, like a well-calculated eclipse, will overtake them with terrible certainty.

ALVA. Have you had them all narrowly watched?

SILVA. All. Egmont especially. He is the only one whose demeanor since your arrival remains unchanged. The livelong day he is now on one horse and now on another; he invites guests as usual, is merry and entertaining at table, plays at dice, shoots, and at night steals to his

mistress. The others, on the contrary, have made a manifest pause in their mode of life; they remain at home, and, from the outward aspect of their houses, you would imagine that there was a sick man within.

ALVA. To work then ere they recover in spite of us.

SILVA. I shall bring them without fail. In obedience to your commands we load them with officious honors; they are alarmed; cautiously, yet anxiously they tender their thanks, feel that flight would be the most prudent course, yet none venture to adopt it; they hesitate, are unable to work together, while the bond which unites them prevents their acting boldly as individuals. They are anxious to withdraw themselves from suspicion, and thus only render themselves more obnoxious to it. I already contemplate with joy the successful realization of your scheme.

ALVA. I rejoice only over what is accomplished, and not easily over that; for there ever remains ground for serious and anxious thought. Fortune is capricious; the common, the worthless, she oft-times ennobles, while she dishonors with a contemptible issue the most maturely-considered schemes. Await the arrival of the princes, then order Gomez to occupy the streets, and hasten yourself to arrest Egmont's secretary, and the others who are specified. This done, return, and announce to my son that he may bring me the tidings of the council.

SILVA. I trust this evening I shall dare to appear in your presence. (*ALVA approaches his son, who has hitherto been standing in the gallery.*) I dare not whisper it even to myself my mind misgives me. The event will, I fear, be different from what he anticipates. I see before me spirits who, still and thoughtful, weigh in ebon scales the doom of princes and of many thousands. Slowly the beam moves up and down; deeply the judges appear to ponder; at length one scale sinks, the other rises, breathed on by the caprice of destiny, and all is decided. [*Exit.*]

ALVA (*advancing with his son*). How did you find the town?

FERDINAND. All is quiet again. I rode, as for pastime, from street to street. Your well-distributed patrols hold Fear so tightly yoked that she does not venture even to whisper. The town resembles a plain when the lightning's glare announces the impending storm: no bird, no beast is to be seen, that is not stealing to a place of shelter.

ALVA. Has nothing further occurred?

FERDINAND. Egmont, with a few companions, rode into the market-place; we exchanged greetings; he was mounted on an unbroken charger, which excited my admiration, "Let us hasten to break in our steeds," he exclaimed; "we shall need them ere long!" He said that he should see me again to-day; he is coming here at your desire to deliberate with you.

ALVA. He will see you again.

FERDINAND. Among all the knights whom I know here he pleases me the best. I think we shall be friends.

ALVA. You are always rash and inconsiderate. I recognize in you your mother's levity, which threw her unconditionally into my arms. Appearances have already allured you precipitately into many dangerous connections.

FERDINAND. You will find me ever submissive.

ALVA. I pardon this inconsiderate kindness, this heedless gaiety, in consideration of your youthful blood. Only forget not on what mission I am sent, and what part in it I would assign to you.

FERDINAND. Admonish me, and spare me not, when you deem it needful.

ALVA (*after a pause*). My son!

FERDINAND. Father!

ALVA. The princes will be here anon; Orange and Egmont. It is not mistrust that has withheld me till now from disclosing to you what is about to take place. They will not depart hence.

FERDINAND. What do you purpose?

ALVA. It has been resolved to arrest them. You are astonished! Learn what you have to do; the reasons you shall know when all is accomplished. Time fails now to unfold them. With you alone I wish to deliberate on the weightiest, the most secret matters; a powerful bond holds us linked together; you are dear and precious to me; on you I would bestow everything. Not the habit of obedience alone would I impress upon you; I desire also to implant within your mind the power to realize, to command, to execute; to you I would bequeath a vast inheritance, to the king a most useful servant; I would endow you with the noblest of my possessions, that you may not be ashamed to appear among your brethren.

FERDINAND. How deeply I am indebted to you for this love, which you manifest for me alone, while a whole kingdom stands in fear of you!

ALVA. Now hear what is to be done. As soon as the princes have entered every avenue to the palace will be guarded. This duty is confided to Gomez. Silva will hasten to arrest Egmont's secretary, together with those whom we hold most in suspicion. You, meanwhile, will take the command of the guards stationed at the gates and in the courts. Above all, take care to occupy the adjoining apartment with the trustiest soldiers. Wait in the gallery till Silva returns, then bring me any unimportant paper, as a signal that his commission is executed. Remain in the antechamber till Orange retires; follow him; I will detain Egmont here as though I had some further communication to make to him. At the end of the gallery demand Orange's sword, summon the guards, secure promptly the most dangerous man; I meanwhile will seize Egmont here.

FERDINAND. I obey, my father — for the first time with a heavy and an anxious heart.

ALVA. I pardon you; this is the first great day of your life.

Enter SILVA.

SILVA. A courier from Antwerp. Here is Orange's letter. He is not coming.

ALVA. Says the messenger so?

SILVA. No, my own heart tells me.

ALVA. In thee speaks my evil genius. (*After reading the letter he makes a sign to the two, and they retire to the gallery. ALVA remains alone in front of the stage.*) He comes not! Till the last moment he delays declaring himself. He dares not to come! So, then, the cautious man, contrary to all expectation, is for once cautious enough to lay aside his wonted caution. The hour moves on. Let the hand travel but a short space over the dial, and a great work is done or lost — irrevocably lost; for the opportunity can never be retrieved, nor can our intention remain concealed. Long had I maturely weighed everything, foreseen even this contingency, and firmly resolved in my own mind what in that case was to be done; and now, when I am called upon to act, I can with difficulty guard my mind from being again distracted by conflicting doubts. Is it expedient to seize the others if he escape me? Shall I delay, and suffer Egmont to elude my grasp, together with his friends, and so many others who now, and perhaps for to-day only, are in my hands? Thus destiny controls even thee — the uncontrollable! How long matured! How well prepared!

How great, how admirable the plan! How nearly had hope attained the goal! And now, at the decisive moment, thou art placed between two evils; as into a lottery thou dost grasp into the dark future; what thou hast drawn remains still unrolled, to thee unknown whether it is a prize or a blank! (*He becomes attentive, like one who hears a noise, and steps to the window.*) 'Tis he! Egmont! Did thy steed bear thee hither so lightly, and started not at the scent of blood, at the spirit with the naked sword who received thee at the gate? Dismount! Lo, now thou hast one foot in the grave! And now both! Aye, caress him, and for the last time stroke his neck for the gallant service he has rendered thee. And for me no choice is left. The delusion in which Egmont ventures here to-day cannot a second time deliver him into my hands! Hark! (*FERDINAND and SILVA enter hastily.*) Obey my orders. I swerve not from my purpose. I shall detain Egmont here as best I may till you bring me tidings from Silva. Then remain at hand. Thee, too, fate has robbed of the proud honor of arresting with thine own hand the king's greatest enemy. (*To SILVA.*) Be prompt! (*To FERDINAND.*) Advance to meet him. (*ALVA remains some moments alone, pacing the chamber in silence.*)

Enter EGMONT.

EGMONT. I come to learn the king's commands; to hear what service he demands from our loyalty, which remains eternally devoted to him.

ALVA. He desires above all to hear your counsel.

EGMONT. Upon what subject? Does Orange come also? I thought I should find him here.

ALVA. I regret that he fails us at this important crisis. The king desires your counsel, your opinion as to the best means of tranquillizing these states. He trusts, indeed, that you will zealously co-operate with him in quelling these disturbances, and in securing to these provinces the benefit of complete and permanent order.

EGMONT. You, my lord, should know better than I that tranquillity is already sufficiently restored, and was still more so till the appearance of fresh troops again agitated the public mind, and filled it anew with anxiety and alarm.

ALVA. You seem to intimate that it would have been more advisable if the king had not placed me in a position to interrogate you.

EGMONT. Pardon me! It is not for me to determine whether the king acted advisedly in sending the army hither, whether the might of his royal presence alone would not have operated more powerfully. The army is here, the king is not. But we should be most ungrateful were we to forget what we owe to the Regent. Let it be acknowledged! By her prudence and valor, by her judicious use of authority and force, of persuasion and finesse, she pacified the insurgents, and, to the astonishment of the world, succeeded, in the course of a few months, in bringing a rebellious people back to their duty.

ALVA. I deny it not. The insurrection is quelled; and the people appear to be already forced back within the bounds of obedience. But does it not depend upon their caprice alone to overstep these bounds? Who shall prevent them from again breaking loose? Where is the power capable of restraining them? Who will be answerable to us for their future loyalty and submission? Their own goodwill is the sole pledge we have.

EGMONT. And is not the good-will of a people the surest, the noblest pledge? By heaven! when can a monarch hold himself more secure, ay, against both foreign and domestic foes, than when all can stand for one, and one for all?

ALVA. You would not have us believe, however, that such is the case here at present?

EGMONT. Let the king proclaim a general pardon; he will thus tranquillize the public mind; and it will be seen how speedily loyalty and affection will return when confidence is restored.

ALVA. How! And suffer those who have insulted the majesty of the king, who have violated the sanctuaries of our religion, to go abroad unchallenged! living witnesses that enormous crimes may be perpetrated with impunity!

EGMONT. And ought not a crime of frenzy, of intoxication, to be excused rather than cruelly chastised? Especially when there is the sure hope, nay, more, where there is positive certainty, that the evil will never again recur? Would not sovereigns thus be more secure? Are not those monarchs most extolled by the world and by posterity who can pardon, pity, despise an offence against their dignity? Are they not on that account likened to God himself, who is far too exalted to be assailed by every idle blasphemy?

ALVA. And, therefore, should the king contend for the honor of God and of religion, we for the authority of the

king. What the supreme power disdains to avert, it is our duty to avenge. Were I to counsel, no guilty person should live to rejoice in his impunity.

EGMONT. Think you that you will be able to reach them all? Do we not daily hear that fear is driving them to and fro, and forcing them out of the land? The more wealthy will escape to other countries with their property, their children, and their friends; while the poor will carry their industrious hands to our neighbors.

ALVA. They will, if they cannot be prevented. It is on this account that the king desires counsel and aid from every prince, zealous co-operation from every stadtholder; not merely a description of the present posture of affairs, or conjectures as to what might take place were events suffered to hold on their course without interruption. To contemplate a mighty evil, to flatter oneself with hope, to trust to time, to strike a blow, like the clown in a play, so as to make a noise and appear to do something, when in fact one would fain do nothing; is not such conduct calculated to awaken a suspicion that those who act thus contemplate with satisfaction a rebellion, which they would not indeed excite, but which they are by no means unwilling to encourage?

EGMONT (*about to break forth, restrains himself, and after a brief pause, speaks with composure*). Not every design is obvious, and many a man's design is misconstrued. It is widely rumored, however, that the object which the king has in view is not so much to govern the provinces according to uniform and clearly-defined laws, to maintain the majesty of religion, and to give his people universal peace, as unconditionally to subjugate them, to rob them of their ancient rights, to appropriate their possessions, to curtail the fair privileges of the nobles, for whose sake alone they are ready to serve him with life and limb. Religion, it is said, is merely a splendid device, behind which every dangerous design may be contrived with the greater ease; the prostrate crowds adore the sacred symbols pictured there, while behind lurks the fowler ready to ensnare them.

ALVA. This I must hear from you?

EGMONT. I speak not my own sentiments! I but repeat what is loudly rumored, and uttered now here and now there by great and by humble, by wise men and fools. The Netherlanders fear a double yoke, and who will be surety to them for their liberty?

ALVA. Liberty! A fair word when rightly understood. What liberty would they have? What is the freedom of the most free? To do 'right! And in that the monarch will not hinder them. No! No! They imagine themselves enslaved when they have not the power to injure themselves and others. Would it not be better to abdicate at once rather than rule such a people? When the country is threatened by foreign invaders, the burghers, occupied only with their immediate interests, bestow no thought upon the advancing foe, and when the king requires their aid, they quarrel among themselves, and thus, as it were, conspire with the enemy. Far better is it to circumscribe their power, to control and guide them for their good, as children are controlled and guided. Trust me, a people grows neither old nor wise, a people remains always in its infancy.

EGMONT. How rarely does a king attain wisdom! And is it not fit that the many should confide their interests to the many rather than to the one? And not even to the one, but to the few servants of the one, men who have grown old under the eyes of their master. To grow wise, it seems, is the exclusive privilege of these favored individuals.

ALVA. Perhaps for the very reason that they are not left to themselves.

EGMONT. And therefore they would fain leave no one else to his own guidance. Let them do what they like, however; I have replied to your questions, and I repeat, the measures you propose will never succeed! They cannot succeed! I know my countrymen. They are men worthy to tread God's earth; each complete in himself, a little king, steadfast, active, capable, loyal, attached to ancient customs. It may be difficult to win their confidence, but it is easy to retain it. Firm and unbending! They may be crushed but not subdued.

ALVA (*who during this speech has looked round several times*). Would you venture to repeat what you have uttered in the king's presence?

EGMONT. It were the worse, if in his presence I were restrained by fear! The better for him and for his people if he inspired me with confidence, if he encouraged me to give yet freer utterance to my thoughts.

ALVA. What is profitable I can listen to as well as he.

EGMONT. I would say to him — 'Tis easy for the shepherd to drive before him a flock of sheep; the ox draws the

plough without opposition; but if you would ride the noble steed, you must study his thoughts, you must require nothing unreasonable, nor unreasonably, from him. The burgher desires to retain his ancient constitution; to be governed by his own countrymen; and why? Because he knows in that case how he shall be ruled, because he can rely upon their disinterestedness, upon their sympathy with his fate.

ALVA. And ought not the Regent to be empowered to alter these ancient usages? Should not this constitute his fairest privilege? What is permanent in this world? And shall the constitution of a state alone remain unchanged? Must not every relation alter in the course of time, and, on that very account, an ancient constitution become the source of a thousand evils, because not adapted to the present condition of the people? These ancient rights afford, doubtless, convenient loopholes, through which the crafty and the powerful may creep, and wherein they may lie concealed to the injury of the people and of the entire community; and it is on this account, I fear, that they are held in such high esteem.

EGMONT. And these arbitrary changes, these unlimited encroachments of the supreme power, are they not indications that one will permit himself to do what is forbidden to thousands? The monarch would alone be free, that he may have it in his power to gratify his every wish, to realize his every thought. And though we should confide in him as a good and virtuous sovereign, will he be answerable to us for his successors? That none who come after him shall rule without consideration, without forbearance! And who would deliver us from absolute caprice, should he send hither his servants, his minions, who, without knowledge of the country and its requirements, should govern according to their own good pleasure, meet with no opposition, and know themselves exempt from all responsibility?

ALVA (*who has meanwhile again looked round*). There is nothing more natural than that a king should choose to retain the power in his own hands, and that he should select as the instruments of his authority those who best understand him, who desire to understand him, and who will unconditionally execute his will.

EGMONT. And just as natural is it that the burgher should prefer being governed by one born and reared in the same land, whose notions of right and wrong are in harmony with his own, and whom he can regard as his brother.

ALVA. And yet the noble, methinks, has shared rather unequally with these brethren of his.

EGMONT. That took place centuries ago, and is now submitted to without envy. But should new men, whose presence is not needed in the country, be sent to enrich themselves a second time at the cost of the nation; should the people see themselves exposed to their bold, unscrupulous rapacity, it would excite a ferment that would not soon be quelled.

ALVA. You utter words to which I ought not to listen; — I, too, am a foreigner.

EGMONT. That they are spoken in your presence is a sufficient proof that they have no reference to you.

ALVA. Be that as it may, I would rather not hear them from you. The king sent me here in the hope that I should obtain the support of the nobles. The king wills, and will have his will obeyed. After profound deliberation, the king at length discerns what course will best promote the welfare of the people; matters cannot be permitted to go on as heretofore; it is the king's intention to limit their power for their own good; if necessary, to force upon them their salvation: to sacrifice the more dangerous burghers in order that the rest may find repose, and enjoy in peace the blessing of a wise government. This is his resolve; this I am commissioned to announce to the nobles; and in his name I require from them advice, not as to the course to be pursued — on that he is resolved — but as to the best means of carrying his purpose into effect.

EGMONT. Your words, alas, justify the fears of the people, the universal fear! The king then has resolved as no sovereign ought to resolve. In order to govern his subjects more easily, he would crush, subvert, nay, ruthlessly destroy, their strength, their spirit, and their self-respect! He would violate the inmost core of their individuality, doubtless with the view of promoting their happiness. He would annihilate them, that they may assume a new, a different form. Oh! if his purpose be good, he is fatally misguided! It is not the king whom we resist; — we but place ourselves in the way of the monarch, who, unhappily, is about to take the first rash step in a wrong direction.

ALVA. Such being your sentiments, it were a vain attempt for us to endeavor to agree. You must, indeed, think poorly of the king, and contemptibly of his counsellors, if you imagine that everything has not already been thought

of and maturley weighed. I have no commission a second time to balance conflicting arguments. From these people I demand submission;—and from you, their leaders and princes, I demand counsel and support as pledges of this unconditional duty.

EGMONT. Demand our heads, and your object is attained; to a noble soul it must be indifferent whether he stoop his neck to such a yoke or lay it upon the block. I have spoken much to little purpose. I have agitated the air, but accomplished nothing.

Enter FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. Pardon my intrusion. Here is a letter, the bearer of which urgently demands an answer.

ALVA. Allow me to peruse its contents. (*Steps aside*).

FERDINAND (*to EGMONT*). 'Tis a noble steed that your people have brought to carry you away.

EGMONT. I have seen worse. I have had him some time; I think of parting with him. If he pleases you we shall probably soon agree as to the price.

FERDINAND. We will think about it.

(*ALVA motions to his son, who retires to the background.*).

EGMONT. Farewell! Allow me to retire; for, by heaven, I know not what more I can say.

ALVA. Fortunately for you, chance prevents you from making a fuller disclosure of your sentiments. You incautiously lay bare the recesses of your heart, and your own lips furnish evidence against you more fatal than could be produced by your bitterest adversary.

EGMONT. This reproach disturbs me not. I know my own heart; I know with what honest zeal I am devoted to the king; I know that my allegiance is more true than that of many who, in his service, seek only to serve themselves. I regret that our discussion should terminate so unsatisfactorily, and trust that, in spite of our opposing views, the service of the king, our master, and the welfare of our country, may speedily unite us; another conference, the presence of the princes who to-day are absent, may, perchance, in a more propitious moment, accomplish what at present appears impossible. In this hope I take my leave.

ALVA (*who at the same time makes a sign to FERDINAND*). Hold, Egmont!—Your sword!—(*The centre door opens and discloses the gallery, which is occupied with guards, who remain motionless.*)

EGMONT (*after a pause of astonishment*). This was the intention? For this thou hast summoned me? (*Grasping his sword as if to defend himself.*) Am I then weaponless?

ALVA. The king commands. Thou art my prisoner. (*At the same time guards enter from both sides.*)

EGMONT (*after a pause*). The king? — Orange! Orange! (*After a pause, resigning his sword.*) Take it! It has been employed far oftener in defending the cause of my king than in protecting this breast. (*He retires by the centre door, followed by the guard and ALVA's son. ALVA remains standing while the curtain falls.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Street. Twilight.*

CLARA, BRACKENBURG, BURGHERS.

BRACKENBURG. Dearest, for heaven's sake, what wouldst thou do?

CLARA. Come with me, Brackenburg! Thou canst not know the people, we are certain to rescue him; for what can equal their love for him? Each feels, I could swear it, the burning desire to deliver him, to avert danger from a life so precious, and to restore freedom to the most free. Come! A voice only is wanting to call them together. In their souls the memory is still fresh of all they owe him, and well they know that his mighty arm alone shields them from destruction. For his sake, for their own sake, they must peril everything. And what do we peril? At most our lives, which, if he perish, are not worth preserving.

BRACKENBURG. Unhappy girl! Thou seest not the power that holds us fettered as with bands of iron.

CLARA. To me it does not appear invincible. Let us not lose time in idle words. Here comes some of our old, honest, valiant burghers! Hark ye, friends! Neighbors! Hark! — Say, how fares it with Egmont?

CARPENTER. What does the girl want? Tell her to hold her peace.

CLARA. Step nearer, that we may speak low, till we are united and more strong. Not a moment is to be lost!

Audacious tyranny, that dared to fetter him, already lifts the dagger against his life. Oh, my friends! With the advancing twilight my anxiety grows more intense. I dread this night. Come! Let us disperse; let us hasten from quarter to quarter, and call out the burghers. Let every one grasp his ancient weapons. In the market-place we meet again, and every one will be carried onward by our gathering stream. The enemy will see themselves surrounded, overwhelmed, and be compelled to yield. How can a handful of slaves resist us? And he will return among us, he will see himself rescued, and can for once thank us, us, who are already so deeply in his debt. He will behold, perchance, ay, doubtless, he will again behold the morn's red dawn in the free heavens.

CARPENTER. What ails thee, maiden?

CLARA. Can ye misunderstand me? I speak of the Count! I speak of Egmont.

JETTER. Speak not the name! 'tis deadly.

CLARA. Not speak his name? How? Not Egmont's name? Is it not on every tongue? Where stands it not inscribed? Often have I read it emblazoned with all its letters among these stars. Not utter it? What mean ye? Friends! good, kind neighbors, ye are dreaming; collect yourselves. Gaze not upon me with those fixed and anxious looks! Cast not such timid glances on every side! I but give utterance to the wish of all. Is not my voice the voice of your own hearts? Who, in this fearful night, ere he seeks his restless couch, but on bended knee will, in earnest prayer, seek to wrest his life as a cherished boon from heaven? Ask each other! Let each ask his own heart! And who but exclaims with me,—“Egmont's liberty, or death!”

JETTER. God help us! This is a sad business.

CLARA. Stay! Stay! Shrink not away at the sound of his name, to meet whom ye were wont to press forward so joyously!—When rumor announced his approach, when the cry arose, “Egmont comes! He comes from Ghent!”—then happy, indeed, were those citizens who dwelt in the streets through which he was to pass. And when the neighing of his steed was heard, did not every one throw aside his work, while a ray of hope and joy, like a sunbeam from his countenance, stole over the toil-worn faces that peered from every window. Then, as ye stood in the doorways, ye would lift up your children in your arms, and,

pointing to him, exclaim: "See, that is Egmont, he who towers above the rest? 'Tis from him that ye must look for better times than those your poor fathers have known." Let not your children inquire at some future day, "Where is he? Where are the better times ye promised us?"—Thus we waste the time in idle words! do nothing,—betray him.

SOEST. Shame on thee, Brackenburg! Let her not run on thus! Prevent the mischief!

BRACKENBURG. Dear Clara! Let us go! What will your mother say? Perchance——

CLARA. Thinkest thou I am a child, or frantic? What avails perchance?—With no vain hope canst thou hide from me this dreadful certainty . . . Ye shall hear me and ye will: for I see it, ye are overwhelmed, ye cannot hearken to the voice of your own hearts. Through the present peril cast but one glance into the past,—the recent past. Send your thoughts forward into the future. Could ye live, would ye live, were he to perish? With him expires the last breath of freedom. What was he not to you? For whose sake did he expose himself to the direst perils? His blood flowed, his wounds were healed for you alone. The mighty spirit that upheld you all a dungeon now confines, while the horrors of secret murder are hovering around. Perhaps he thinks of you—perhaps he hopes in you,—he who has been accustomed only to grant favors to others and to fulfil their prayers.

CARPENTER. Come, gossip.

CLARA. I have neither the arms nor the vigor of a man; but I have that which ye all lack—courage and contempt of danger. Oh, that my breath could kindle your souls! That, pressing you to this bosom, I could arouse and animate you! Come! I will march in your midst!—As a waving banner, though weaponless, leads on a gallant army of warriors, so shall my spirit hover, like a flame, over your ranks, while love and courage shall unite the dispersed and wavering multitude into a terrible host.

JETTER. Take her away; I pity her, poor thing!

[*Exeunt* BURGHERS.]

BRACKENBURG. Clara! Seest thou not where we are?

CLARA. Where! Under the dome of heaven, which has so often seemed to arch itself more gloriously as the noble Egmont passed beneath it. From these windows I have seen them look forth, four or five heads one above the

other; at these doors the cowards have stood, bowing and scraping. if he but chanced to look down upon them! Oh, how dear they were to me when they honored him. Had he been a tyrant they might have turned with indifference from his fall! But they loved him! Oh, ye hands so prompt to wave caps in his honor, can ye not grasp a sword? Brackenburgh, and we? — do we chide them? These arms that have so often embraced him, what do they for him now? Stratagem has accomplished so much in the world. Thou knowest the ancient castle, every passage, every secret way. Nothing is impossible, — suggest some plan —

BRACKENBURGH. That we might go home!

CLARA. Well.

BRACKENBURGH. There, at the corner, I see Alva's guard; let the voice of reason penetrate to thy heart! Dost thou deem me a coward? Dost thou doubt that for thy sake I would peril my life? Here we are both mad, I as well as thou. Dost thou not perceive that thy scheme is impracticable? Oh, be calm! Thou art beside thyself.

CLARA. Beside myself! Horrible. You, Brackenburgh, are beside yourself. When you hailed the hero with loud acclaim, called him your friend, your hope, your refuge, shouted vivats as he passed; — then I stood in my corner, half-opened the window, concealed myself while I listened, and my heart beat higher than yours who greeted him so loudly. Now it again beats higher! In the hour of peril you conceal yourselves, deny him, and feel not, that if he perish, you are lost.

BRACKENBURGH. Come home.

CLARA. Home?

BRACKENBURGH. Recollect thyself! Look around thee! These are the streets in which thou wert wont to appear only on the Sabbath-day, when thou didst walk modestly to church; where, over-decorous perhaps, thou wert displeased if I but joined thee with a kindly greeting. And now thou dost stand, speak, and act before the eyes of the whole world. Recollect thyself, love! How can this avail us?

CLARA. Home! Yes, I remember. Come, Brackenburgh, let us go home! Knowest thou where my home lies?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Prison.*

Lighted by a lamp, a couch in the back-ground.

EGMONT (*alone*). Old friend! Ever faithful sleep, dost thou, too, forsake me like my other friends? How thou wert wont of yore to descend unsought upon my free brow, cooling my temples as with a myrtle wreath of love! Amidst the din of battle, on the waves of life, I rested in thine arms, breathing lightly as a growing boy. When tempests whistled through the leaves and boughs, when the summits of the lofty trees swung creaking in the blast, the inmost core of my heart remained unmoved. What agitates thee now? What shakes thy firm and steadfast mind? I feel it; 'tis the sound of the murderous axe gnawing at thy root. Yet I stand erect, but an inward shudder runs through my frame. Yes, it prevails, this treacherous power; it undermines the firm, the lofty stem, and ere the bark withers thy verdant crown falls crashing to the earth.

Yet wherefore now, thou who hast so often chased the weightiest cares like bubbles from thy brow, wherefore canst thou not dissipate this dire foreboding which incessantly haunts thee in a thousand different shapes? Since when hast thou trembled at the approach of death, amid whose varying forms thou wert wont calmly to dwell, as with the other shapes of this familiar earth? But 'tis not he, the sudden foe, to encounter whom the sound bosom emulously pants; — 'tis the dungeon, emblem of the grave, revolting alike to the hero and the coward. How intolerable I used to feel it, in the stately hall, girt round by gloomy walls, when, seated on my cushioned chair in the solemn assembly of the princes, questions which scarcely required deliberation were overlaid with endless discussions, while the rafters of the ceiling seemed to stifle and oppress me. Then I would hurry forth as soon as possible, fling myself upon my horse with deep-drawn breath, and away to the wide champaign, man's natural element, where, exhaling from the earth, nature's richest treasures are poured forth around us, while, from the wide heavens, the stars shed down their blessings through the still air; where, like earth-born giants, we spring aloft, invigorated by our mother's touch; where our entire humanity and our human desires throb in every vein; where the desire to press forward, to vanquish, to snatch, to use his clenched fist, to

possess, to conquer, glows through the soul of the young hunter; where the warrior, with rapid stride, assumes his inborn right to dominion over the world, and, with terrible liberty, sweeps like a desolating hail-storm over field and grove, knowing no boundaries traced by the hand of man.

Thou art but a shadow, a dream of the happiness I so long possessed; where has treacherous fate conducted thee? Did she deny thee to meet the rapid stroke of never-shunned death in the open face of day only to prepare for thee a foretaste of the grave, in the midst of this loathsome corruption? How revoltingly its rank odor exhales from these damp stones! Life stagnates, and my foot shrinks from the couch as from the grave.

O care, care! Thou who dost begin prematurely the work of murder, forbear;—since when has Egmont been alone, so utterly alone in the world? 'Tis doubt renders thee insensible, not happiness. The justice of the king, in which through life thou hast confided, the friendship of the regent, which, thou may'st confess it, was akin to love,—have these suddenly vanished, like a meteor of the night, and left thee alone upon thy gloomy path? Will not Orange, at the head of thy friends, contrive some daring scheme? Will not the people assemble, and with gathering might attempt the rescue of their faithful friend?

Ye walls, which thus gird me round, separate me not from the well-intentioned zeal of so many kindly souls. And may the courage with which my glance was wont to inspire them now return again from their hearts to mine. Yes! they assemble in thousands! they come! they stand beside me! their pious wish rises urgently to heaven, and implores a miracle; and if no angel stoops for my deliverance, I see them grasp eagerly their lance and sword. The gates are forced, the bolts are riven, the walls fall beneath their conquering hands, and Egmont advances, joyously, to hail the freedom of the rising morn. How many well-known faces receive me with loud acclaim! O Clara! wert thou a man I should see thee here the very first, and thank thee for that which it is galling to owe even to a king—liberty.

SCENE III. *Clara's House.*

CLARA (*enters from her chamber with a lamp and a glass of water; she places the glass upon the table and steps to the window*). Brackenburch, is it you? What noise was that?

No one yet? No one! I will set the lamp in the window, that he may see that I am still awake, that I still watch for him. He promised me tidings. Tidings? horrible certainty! — Egmont condemned! — what tribunal has the right to summon him? — And they dare to condemn him! — Does the king condemn him, or the duke? And the regent withdraws herself! Orange hesitates, and all his friends? — Is this the world, of whose fickleness and treachery I have heard so much, and as yet experienced nothing? Is this the world? — Who could be so base as to bear malice against one so dear? Could villainy itself be audacious enough to overwhelm with sudden destruction the object of a nation's homage? Yet so it is — it is — O Egmont, I held thee safe before God and man, safe as in my arms! What was I to thee? Thou hast called me thine, my whole being was devoted to thee. What am I now? In vain I stretch out my hand to the toils that environ thee. Thou helpless and I free! — Here is the key that unlocks my chamber door. My going out and my coming in depend upon my own caprice; yet, alas, to aid thee I am powerless! — Oh, bind me that I may not despair; hurl me into the deepest dungeon, that I may dash my head against the damp walls, groan for freedom, and dream how I would rescue him if fetters did not hold me bound. — Now I am free, and in freedom lies the anguish of impotence. — Conscious of my own existence, yet unable to stir a limb in his behalf, alas! even this insignificant portion of thy being, thy Clara, is, like thee, a captive, and, separated from thee, consumes her expiring energies in the agonies of death. — I hear a stealthy step, — a cough — Brackenburg, — 'tis he! — Kind, unhappy man, thy destiny remains ever the same; thy love opens to thee the door at night, alas! to what a doleful meeting. (*Enter BRACKENBURG.*) Thou comest so pale, so terrified! Brackenburg! What is it?

BRACKENBURG. I have sought thee through perils and circuitous paths. The principal streets are occupied with troops; — through lanes and by-ways have I stolen to thee!

CLARA. Tell me, how is it?

BRACKENBURG (*seating himself*). O Clara, let me weep. I loved him not. He was the rich man who lured to better pasture the poor man's solitary lamb. I have never cursed him, God has created me with a true and tender heart. My life was consumed in anguish, and each day I hoped would end my misery.

CLARA. Let that be forgotten, Brackenburg! Forget thyself. Speak to me of him! Is it true? Is he condemned?

BRACKENBURG. He is! I know it.

CLARA. And still lives?

BRACKENBURG. Yes, he still lives.

CLARA. How canst thou be sure of that? Tyranny murders the hero in the night! His blood flows concealed from every eye. The people, stunned and bewildered, lie buried in sleep, dream of deliverance, dream of the fulfilment of their impotent wishes, while, indignant at our supineness, his spirit abandons the world. He is no more! Deceive me not; deceive not thyself!

BRACKENBURG. No, — he lives! and the Spaniards, alas, are preparing for the people, on whom they are about to trample, a terrible spectacle, in order to crush forever, by a violent blow, each heart that yet pants for freedom.

CLARA. Proceed! Calmly pronounce my death-warrant also! Near and more near I approach that blessed land, and already from those realms of peace I feel the breath of consolation. Say on.

BRACKENBURG. From casual words, dropped here and there by the guards, I learned that secretly in the market-place they were preparing some terrible spectacle. Through by-ways and familiar lanes I stole to my cousin's house, and from a back window looked out upon the market-place. Torches waved to and fro, in the hands of a wide circle of Spanish soldiers. I sharpened my unaccustomed sight, and out of the darkness there arose before me a scaffold, black, spacious and lofty! The sight filled me with horror. Several persons were employed in covering with black cloth such portions of the woodwork as yet remained white and visible. The steps were covered last, also with black; — I saw it all. They seemed preparing for the celebration of some horrible sacrifice. A white crucifix, that shone like silver through the night, was raised on one side. As I gazed, the terrible conviction strengthened in my mind. Scattered torches still gleamed here and there; gradually they flickered and went out. Suddenly the hideous birth of night returned into its mother's womb.

CLARA. Hush, Brackenburg! Be still! Let this veil rest upon my soul. The spectres are vanished; and thou, gentle night, lend thy mantle to the inwardly fermenting earth, she will no longer endure the loathsome burden,

shuddering, she rends open her yawning chasms, and with a crash swallows the murderous scaffold. And that God, whom in their rage they have insulted, sends down His angel from on high; at the hallowed touch of the messenger bolts and bars fly back; he pours around our friend a mild radiance, and leads him gently through the night to liberty. My path leads also through the darkness to meet him.

BRACKENBURG (*detaining her*). My child, whither wouldst thou go? What wouldst thou do?

CLARA. Softly, my friend, lest some one should awake! Lest we should awake ourselves! Knowest thou this phial, Brackenburg? I took it from thee once in jest, when thou, as was thy wont, didst threaten, in thy impatience, to end thy days. And now my friend —

BRACKENBURG. In the name of all the saints!

CLARA. Thou canst not hinder me. Death is my portion! Grudge me not the quiet and easy death which thou hadst prepared for thyself. Give me thine hand! At the moment when I uncloset that dismal portal through which there is no return, I may tell thee, with this pressure of the hand, how sincerely I have loved, how deeply I have pitied thee. My brother died young; I chose thee to fill his place; thy heart rebelled, thou didst torment thyself and me, demanding, with ever-increasing fervor, that which fate had not destined for thee. Forgive me and farewell! Let me call thee brother. 'Tis a name that embraces many names. Receive, with a true heart, the last fair token of the departing spirit — take this kiss. Death unites all, Brackenburg — us too it will unite!

BRACKENBURG. Let me then die with thee! Share it! oh, share it! There is enough to extinguish two lives!

CLARA. Hold! Thou must live, thou canst live. Support my mother, who, without thee, would be a prey to want. Be to her what I can no longer be, live together, and weep for me. Weep for our country, and for him who could alone have upheld it. The present generation must still endure this bitter woe; vengeance itself could not obliterate it. Poor souls, live on, through this gap in time, which is time no longer. To-day the world suddenly stands still, its course is arrested, and my pulse will beat but for a few minutes longer. Farewell.

BRACKENBURG. Oh, live with us, as we live only for thy sake! In taking thine own life thou wilt take ours also;

still live and suffer. We will stand by thee; nothing shall sever us from thy side, and love, with ever-watchful solitude, shall prepare for thee the sweetest consolation in its loving arms. Be ours! Ours! I dare not say, mine.

CLARA. Hush, Brackenburg! Thou feelest not what chord thou touchest. Where hope appears to thee I see only despair.

BRACKENBURG. Share hope with the living! Pause on the brink of the precipice, cast one glance into the gulf below, and then look back on us.

CLARA. I have conquered; call me not back to the struggle.

BRACKENBURG. Thou art stunned; enveloped in night, thou seekest the abyss. Every light is not yet extinguished, yet many days! —

CLARA. Alas! Alas! Cruelly thou dost rend the veil from before mine eyes. Yes, the day will dawn! Despite its misty shroud it needs must dawn. Timidly the burgher gazes from his window, night leaves behind an ebon speck; he looks, and the scaffold looms fearfully in the morning light. With re-awakened anguish the desecrated image of the Saviour lifts to the Father its imploring eyes. The sun veils his beams, he will not mark the hero's death-hour. Slowly the fingers go their round — one hour strikes after another — hold! Now is the time. The thought of the morning scares me into the grave. (*She goes to the window as if to look out, and drinks secretly.*)

BRACKENBURG. Clara! Clara!

CLARA (*goes to the table and drinks water*). Here is the remainder. I invite thee not to follow me. Do as thou wilt: farewell. Extinguish this lamp silently and without delay; I am going to rest. Steal quietly away, close the door after thee. Be still! Wake not my mother! Go, save thyself, if thou wouldst not be taken for my murderer.

[*Exit.*

BRACKENBURG. She leaves me for the last time as she has ever done. What human soul could conceive how cruelly she lacerates the heart that loves her. She leaves me to myself, leaves me to choose between life and death, and both are alike hateful to me. To die alone! Weep, ye tender souls! Fate has no sadder doom than mine. She shares with me the death-potion, yet sends me from her side! She draws me after her, yet thrusts me back into life! Oh, Egmont, how enviable a lot falls to thee! She goes before

thee! The crown of victory from her hand is thine, she brings all heaven to meet thee!—And shall I follow? Again to stand aloof? To carry the inextinguishable jealousy even to yon distant realms? Earth is no longer a tarrying place for me, and hell and heaven both offer equal torture. Now welcome to the wretched the dread hand of annihilation! [Exit.

(*The scene remains some time unchanged. Music sounds, indicating CLARA's death; the lamp, which BRACKENBURG had forgotten to extinguish, flares up once or twice, and then suddenly expires. The scene changes to*

SCENE IV. A Prison.

EGMONT is discovered sleeping on a couch. A rustling of keys is heard; the door opens; servants enter with torches; FERDINAND and SILVA follow, accompanied by soldiers; EGMONT starts from his sleep.

EGMONT. Who are ye that thus rudely banish slumber from my eyes? What mean these vague and insolent glances? Why this fearful procession? With what dream of horror come ye to delude my half awakened soul?

SILVA. The duke sends us to announce your sentence.

EGMONT. Do you also bring the headsman who is to execute it?

SILVA. Listen, and you will know the doom that awaits you.

EGMONT. It is in keeping with the rest of your infamous proceedings. Hatched in night and in night achieved, so would this audacious act of injustice shroud itself from observation!—Step boldly forth, thou who dost bear the sword concealed beneath thy mantle; here is my head, the freest ever severed by tyranny from the trunk.

SILVA. You err! The righteous judges who have condemned you will not conceal their sentence from the light of day.

EGMONT. Then does their audacity exceed all imagination and belief.

SILVA (*takes the sentence from an attendant, unfolds it, and reads*). "In the king's name, and invested by his majesty with authority to judge all his subjects of whatever rank, not excepting the knights of the Golden Fleece, we declare ——"

EGMONT. Can the king transfer that authority?

SILVA. "We declare, after a strict and legal investigation, thee, Henry, Count Egmont, Prince of Gaure, guilty of high treason, and pronounce thy sentence:—That at early dawn thou be led from this prison to the market-place, and that there, in sight of the people, and as a warning to all traitors, thou with the sword be brought from life to death. Given at Brussels." (*Date and year so indistinctly read as to be imperfectly heard by the audience.*) "Ferdinand, Duke of Alva, President of the Tribunal of Twelve." Thou knowest now thy doom. Brief time remains for the impending stroke, to arrange thy affairs, and to take leave of thy friends. [*Exit SILVA with followers.* FERDINAND remains with two torch-bearers. The stage is dimly lighted.

EGMONT (*stands for a time as if buried in thought, and allows SILVA to retire without looking round. He imagines himself alone, and, on raising his eyes, beholds ALVA's son.*) Thou tarriest here? Wouldst thou by thy presence augment my amazement, my horror? Wouldst thou carry to thy father the welcome tidings that in unmanly fashion I despair. Go. Tell him that he deceives neither the world nor me. At first it will be whispered cautiously behind his back, then spoken more and more loudly, and when at some future day the ambitious man descends from his proud eminence, a thousand voices will proclaim—that 'twas not the welfare of the state, not the honor of the king, not the tranquillity of the provinces, that brought him hither. For his own selfish ends he, the warrior, has counselled war, that in war the value of his services might be enhanced. He has excited this monstrous insurrection that his presence might be deemed necessary in order to quell it. And I fall a victim to his mean hatred, his contemptible envy. Yes, I know it, dying and mortally wounded I may utter it; long has the proud man envied me, long has he meditated and planned my ruin.

Even then, when still young, we played at dice together, and the heaps of gold, one after the other, passed rapidly from his side to mine; he would look on with affected composure, while inwardly consumed with rage, more at my success than at his own loss. Well do I remember the fiery glance, the treacherous pallor that overspread his features, when, at a public festival, we shot for a wager before assembled thousands. He challenged me, and both nations

stood by; Spaniards and Netherlanders wagered on either side; I was the victor; his ball missed, mine hit the mark, and the air was rent by acclamations from my friends. His shot now hits me. Tell him that I know this, that I know him, that the world despises every trophy that a paltry spirit erects for itself by base and surreptitious arts. And thou! If it be possible for a son to swerve from the manners of his father, practise shame betimes, while thou art compelled to feel shame for him whom thou wouldst fain revere with thy whole heart.

FERDINAND. I listen without interrupting thee! Thy reproaches fall like blows upon a helmet. I feel the shock, but I am armed. They strike, they wound me not; I am sensible only to the anguish that lacerates my heart. Alas! Alas! Have I lived to witness such a scene? Am I sent hither to behold a spectacle like this?

EGMONT. Dost thou break out into lamentations? What moves, what agitates thee thus? Is it a late remorse at having lent thyself to this infamous conspiracy? Thou art so young, thy exterior is so prepossessing. Thy demeanor towards me was so friendly, so unreserved! So long as I beheld thee, I was reconciled with thy father; and crafty, ay, more crafty than he, thou hast lured me into the toils. Thou art the wretch! The monster! Whoso confides in him does so at his own peril; but who could apprehend danger in trusting thee? Go! Go! rob me not of the few moments that are left to me! Go, that I may collect my thoughts, forget the world, and first of all thee!

FERDINAND. What can I say? I stand and gaze on thee, yet see thee not; I am scarcely conscious of my own existence. Shall I seek to excuse myself? Shall I assure thee that it was not till the last moment that I was made aware of my father's intentions? That I acted as a constrained, a passive instrument of his will? What signifies now the opinion thou mayest entertain of me? Thou art lost; and I, miserable wretch, stand here only to assure thee of it, only to lament thy doom.

EGMONT. What strange voice, what unexpected consolation comes thus to cheer my passage to the grave? Thou, the son of my first, of almost my only enemy, thou dost pity me, thou art not associated with my murderers? Speak! In what light must I regard thee?

FERDINAND. Cruel father! Yes, I recognize thy nature in this command. Thou didst know my heart, my disposi-

tion, which thou hast so often censured as the inheritance of a tender-hearted mother. To mould me into thine own likeness thou hast sent me hither. Thou dost compel me to behold this man on the verge of the yawning grave, in the grasp of an arbitrary doom, that I may experience the profoundest anguish; that thus, rendered callous to every fate, I may henceforth meet every event with a heart unmoved.

EGMONT. I am amazed! Be calm! Act, speak like a man.

FERDINAND. Oh, that I were a woman! That they might say — what moves, what agitates thee? Tell me of a greater, a more monstrous crime, make me the spectator of a more direful deed; I will thank thee, I will say: this was nothing.

EGMONT. Thou dost forget thyself. Consider where thou art!

FERDINAND. Let this passion rage, let me give vent to my anguish! I will not seem composed when my whole inner being is convulsed. Thee must I behold here? Thee? It is horrible! Thou understandest me not! How shouldst thou understand me? Egmont! Egmont!

(Falling on his neck.)

EGMONT. Explain this mystery.

FERDINAND. It is no mystery.

EGMONT. Why art thou moved so deeply by the fate of a stranger?

FERDINAND. Not a stranger! Thou art no stranger to me. Thy name it was that, even from my boyhood, shone before me like a star in heaven! How often have I made inquiries concerning thee, and listened to the story of thy deeds. The youth is the hope of the boy, the man of the youth. Thus didst thou walk before me, ever before me; I saw thee without envy, and followed after, step by step; at length I hoped to see thee — I saw thee, and my heart flew to thy embrace. I had destined thee for myself, and when I beheld thee, I made choice of thee anew. I hoped now to know thee, to live with thee, to be thy friend, — thy — 'tis over now and I see thee here!

EGMONT. My friend, if it can be any comfort to thee, be assured that the very moment we met my heart was drawn towards thee. Now listen! Let us exchange a few quiet words. Tell me: is it the stern, the settled purpose of thy father to take my life?

FERDINAND. It is.

EGMONT. This sentence is not a mere empty scare-crow, designed to terrify me, to punish me through fear and intimidation, to humiliate me, that he may then raise me again by the royal favor?

FERDINAND. Alas, no! At first I flattered myself with this delusive hope; and even then my heart was filled with grief and anguish to behold thee thus. Thy doom is real! is certain! No, I cannot command myself. Who will counsel, who will aid me, to meet the inevitable?

EGMONT. Harken then to me! If thy heart is impelled so powerfully in my favor, if thou dost abhor the tyranny that holds me fettered, then deliver me! The moments are precious. Thou art the son of the all-powerful, and thou hast power thyself. Let us fly! I know the roads; the means of effecting our escape cannot be unknown to thee. These walls, a few short miles, alone separate me from my friends. Loose these fetters, conduct me to them; be ours. The king, on some future day, will doubtless thank my deliverer. Now he is taken by surprise, or perchance he is ignorant of the whole proceeding. Thy father ventures on this daring step, and majesty, though horror-struck at the deed, must needs sanction the irrevocable. Thou dost deliberate? Oh, contrive for me the way to freedom! Speak; nourish hope in a living soul.

FERDINAND. Cease! Oh, cease! Every word deepens my despair. There is here no outlet, no counsel, no escape.—'Tis this thought that tortures me, that seizes my heart, and rends it as with talons. I have myself spread the net. I know its firm, inextricable knots; I know that every avenue is barred alike to courage and to stratagem. I feel that I, too, like thyself, like all the rest, am fettered. Think'st thou that I should give way to lamentation if any means of safety remained untried? I have thrown myself at his feet, remonstrated, implored. He has sent me hither, in order to blast in this fatal moment every remnant of joy and happiness that yet survived within my heart.

EGMONT. And is there no deliverance?

FERDINAND. None!

EGMONT (*stamping his foot*). No deliverance! — Sweet life! Sweet pleasant habitude of existence and of activity! from thee must I part! Not in the tumult of battle, amid the din of arms, the excitement of the fray, dost thou send me a hasty farewell; thine is no hurried leave; thou dost

not abridge the moment of separation. Once more let me clasp thy hand, gaze once more into thine eyes, feel with keen emotion, thy beauty and thy worth, then resolutely tear myself away, and say ;— depart !

FERDINAND. Must I stand by and look passively on ; unable to save thee or to give thee aid ! What voice avails for lamentation ! What heart but must break under the pressure of such anguish ?

EGMONT. Be calm !

FERDINAND. Thou canst be calm, thou canst renounce, led on by necessity, thou canst advance to the direful struggle with the courage of a hero. What can I do ? What ought I to do ? Thou dost conquer thyself and us ; thou art the victor ; I survive both myself and thee. I have lost my light at the banquet, my banner on the field. The future lies before me dark, desolate, perplexed.

EGMONT. Young friend, whom by a strange fatality, at the same moment I both win and lose, who dost feel for me, who dost suffer for me the agonies of death, — look on me ;— thou wilt not lose me. If my life was a mirror in which thou didst love to contemplate thyself so be also my death. Men are not together only when in each other's presence ;— the distant, the departed, also live for us. I shall live for thee, and for myself I have lived long enough. I have enjoyed each day ; each day I have performed, with prompt activity, the duties enjoined by my conscience. Now my life ends, as it might have ended, long, long ago, on the sands of Gravelines. I shall cease to live ; but I have lived. My friend, follow in my steps, lead a cheerful and a joyous life, and dread not the approach of death.

FERDINAND. Thou shouldst have saved thyself for us, thou couldst have saved thyself. Thou art the cause of thine own destruction. Often have I listened when able men discoursed concerning thee ; foes and friends, they would dispute long as to thy worth ; but on one point they were agreed, none ventured to deny, every one confessed, that thou wert treading a dangerous path. How often have I longed to warn thee ! Hadst thou then no friends ?

EGMONT. I was warned.

FERDINAND. And when I found all these allegations, point for point, in the indictment, together with thy answers, containing much that might serve to palliate thy conduct, but no evidence weighty enough fully to exculpate thee —

EGMONT. No more of this. Man imagines that he directs his life, that he governs his actions, when in fact his existence is irresistibly controlled by his destiny. Let us not dwell upon this subject; these reflections I can dismiss with ease—not so my apprehensions for these provinces; yet they too will be cared for. Could my blood flow for many, bring peace to my people, how freely should it flow! Alas! This may not be. Yet it ill becomes a man idly to speculate when the power to act is no longer his. If thou canst restrain or guide the fatal power of thy father, do so. Alas, who can?—Farewell!

FERDINAND. I cannot leave thee.

EGMONT. Let me urgently recommend my followers to thy care! I have worthy men in my service; let them not be dispersed, let them not become destitute! How fares it with Richard, my secretary?

FERDINAND. He is gone before thee. They have beheaded him as thy accomplice in high treason.

EGMONT. Poor soul!—Yet one word, and then farewell, I can no more. However powerfully the spirit may be stirred, nature at length irresistibly asserts her rights; and like a child, who, enveloped in a serpent's folds, enjoys refreshing slumber, so the weary one lays himself down to rest before the gates of death, and sleeps soundly, as though a toilsome journey yet lay before him.—One word more,—I know a maiden; thou wilt not despise her because she was mine. Since I can recommend her to thy care, I shall die in peace. Thy soul is noble! in such a man a woman is sure to find a protector. Lives my old Adolphus? Is he free?

FERDINAND. The active old man, who always attended thee on horseback?

EGMONT. The same.

FERDINAND. He lives, he is free.

EGMONT. He knows her dwelling; let him guide thy steps thither, and reward him to his dying day for having shown thee the way to this jewel.—Farewell!

FERDINAND. I cannot leave thee.

EGMONT (*urging him towards the door.*) Farewell!

FERDINAND. Oh, let me linger yet a moment!

EGMONT. No leave-taking, my friend.

(*He accompanies FERDINAND to the door, and then tears himself away; FERDINAND, overwhelmed with grief, hastily retires.*)

EGMONT. Hostile man! Thou didst not think thou would render me this service through thy son. He has been the means of relieving my mind from the pressure of care and sorrow, from fear and every anxious feeling. Gently, yet urgently, nature claims her final tribute. 'Tis past! — 'Tis resolved! And the reflections which, in the suspense of last night, kept me wakeful on my couch, now lull my senses to repose with invincible certainty. (*He seats himself upon the couch; music.*) Sweet sleep! Like the purest happiness, thou comest most willingly, uninvited, unsought. Thou dost loosen the knots of earnest thoughts, dost mingle all images of joy and of sorrow; unimpeded the circle of inner harmony flows on, and, wrapped in fond delusion, we sink away and cease to be.

(*He sleeps; music accompanies his slumber. Behind his couch the wall appears to open and discovers a brilliant apparition. Freedom in a celestial garb, surrounded by a glory, reposes on a cloud. Her features are those of CLARA, and she inclines towards the sleeping hero. Her countenance betokens compassion, she seems to lament his fate. Quickly she recovers herself, and with an encouraging gesture exhibits the symbols of freedom, the bundle of arrows, with the staff and cap. She encourages him to be of good cheer, and while she signifies to him that his death will secure the freedom of the provinces, she hails him as a conqueror, and extends to him a laurel crown. As the wreath approaches his head, EGMONT moves like one asleep, and reclines with his face towards her. She holds the wreath suspended over his head;—martial music is heard in the distance; at the first sound the vision disappears. The music grows louder and louder. EGMONT awakes. The prison is dimly illuminated by the dawn. — His first impulse is to lift his hand to his head; he stands up, and gazes round, his hand still upraised.*)

The crown is vanished! Beautiful vision, the light of day has frightened thee! Yes, they revealed themselves to my sight uniting in one radiant form the two sweetest joys of my heart. Divine Liberty borrowed the mien of my beloved one; the lovely maiden arrayed herself in the celestial garb of my friend. In a solemn moment they appeared united, with aspect more earnest than tender. With blood-stained feet the vision approached; the waving folds of her robe also were tinged with blood. It was my blood, and the blood of many brave hearts. No! It shall not be shed in vain! Forward! Brave people! The goddess of liberty leads you on! And as the sea breaks through and destroys the barriers that would oppose its fury, so do ye

overwhelm the bulwark of tyranny, and with her impetuous flood sweep it away from the land which it usurps. (*Drums.*)

Hark! Hark! How often has this sound summoned my joyous steps to the field of battle and of victory! How bravely did I tread, with my gallant comrades, the dangerous path of fame! And now from this dungeon I shall go forth to meet a glorious death; I die for freedom, for the cause of which I have lived and fought, and for which I now offer myself up a sorrowing sacrifice. (*The background is occupied by Spanish soldiers with halberts.*)

Yes, lead them on! Close your ranks; ye terrify me not. I am accustomed to stand amid the serried ranks of war, and environed by the threatening forms of death; to feel, with double zest, the energy of life. (*Drums.*)

The foe closes round on every side! Swords are flashing; courage, friends! Behind are your parents, your wives, your children! (*Pointing to the guard.*)

And these are impelled by the word of their leader, not by their own free will. Protect your homes! And to save those who are most dear to you, be ready to follow my example, and to fall with joy.

(*Drums. As he advances through the guards towards the door in the background the curtain falls. The music joins in, and the scene closes with a symphony of victory.*)

THE WAYWARD LOVER:

A PASTORAL DRAMA IN VERSE AND IN ONE ACT

TRANSLATED BY EDGAR A. BOWRING, C. B.

This little drama was written in the years 1767 and 1768, whilst Goethe, at the age of eighteen, was still a student at Leipsic. It commemorates his attachment to Katarina Schönkopf, the circumstances of which are illustrated by the characters of Eridon and Amina.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EGLÉ.

ERIDON.

AMINA.

LAMON.

THE WAYWARD LOVER.

SCENE I.

AMINA and EGLE are sitting on one side of the theatre making garlands. LAMON enters, bringing a basket of flowers.

LAMON (*putting down the basket*).

I've brought more flowers.

EGLE.

Oh, thanks!

LAMON.

How fair they are! Just see!

This pink is thine.

EGLE.

The rose? ——

LAMON.

Dear child, that's not for thee!

Amina shall to-day receive this floweret fair;
I think a rose looks best contrasted with black hair.

EGLE.

And this thou callest polite, obliging in a lover?

LAMON.

For one who loves, thou'rt slow my nature to discover.
I'm perfectly aware thou lovest only me,
And my true heart in turn will ever beat for thee;
Thou knowest it. Yet thou seekest still stronger chains
than these?

Is it so wrong to think that other maids can please?
I let thee say; that youth is handsome, this one charming,
Or full of wit, and I see nothing there alarming,
But say so too.

EGLE.

Ne'er lose thy temper, nor will I.
Both make the same mistake. To words of flattery
Oft listen I well pleased; soft words dost thou address,
When I'm not there to hear, to many a shepherdess.
The heart should never deem a little jesting hard;
'Gainst fickleness a mind that's cheerful is a guard.
I'm subject less than thou to jealousy's dominion.

(To AMINA.)

Thou smilest at us? Say, dear friend, what's thy opinion?

AMINA.

I've none.

EGLE.

And yet thou knowest I'm happy whilst thou'rt sad.

AMINA.

How so?

EGLE.

How so! Instead of being, like us, glad,
And making all Love's sulks before your laughter fly,
Thy pain begins whene'er thy lover meets thine eye.
I never knew a more unpleasant, selfish creature.
Thou think'st he loves thee. No, I better know his nature;
He sees that thou obeyest. The tyrant loves thee solely
Because thou art a maid who will obey him wholly.

AMINA.

He oft obeys me, too.

EGLE.

To be still more thy master.
Thou watchest all his looks, for fear of some disaster;
The power that in our looks Dame Nature has installed,
Whereby mankind are cowed, and charmingly enthralled,
Hast thou to him transferred, and thou art happy now
If he looks only pleased. With deeply wrinkled brow,
Contracted eyebrows, eyes all wild and dark as night,
And tightly fastened lips, a very charming sight
Appears he every day, till kisses, tears, harangues,
Disperse each wintry cloud that o'er his forehead hangs.

AMINA.

Thou knowest him not enough, thou never wert his lover;
It is not selfishness that clouds his forehead over.

A whimsical chagrin upon his bosom preys,
 And spoils for both of us the finest summer days:
 And yet I'm well content that when my voice he hears,
 And all my coaxing words, each whim soon disappears.

EGLE.

A mighty bliss, indeed, which one full well might spare!
 But name one single joy that he allowed thee e'er.
 How throbbed thy breast, whene'er a dance appeared in
 view!

Thy lover flies the dance, and takes thee with him, too.
 No wonder he can't bear thy presence at a feast;
 He hates the very glass touched by thee in the least.
 As rivals deems he e'en the birds that chance to please thee;
 How could he happy be, to see another seize thee,
 And press thee to his heart, and whisper words of love,
 As in the whirling dance before his eyes ye move?

AMINA.

Pray be not so unfair, without the least objection
 He let me join this feast, with thee as my protection.

EGLE.

Thou'lt learn the truth soon.

AMINA.

How?

EGLE.

Now, wherefore comes he not?

AMINA.

He little loves the dance.

EGLE.

Tis nothing but a plot.

If thou returnest well pleased, he'll ask thee in a trice:—
 "You had a happy day?"—"Yes."—"That is very nice.
 "You played?"—"At forfeits."—"Ah! was Damon also
 there?
 "You danced?"—"Yes, round the tree."—"I fain had
 seen the pair.
 "He danced right well? And what reward received the
 youth?"

AMINA (*smiling*).

Yes.

EGLE.

Smilest thou?

AMINA.

Yes, my friend, that is his tone, in truth. —
More flowers!

LAMON.

The best are these.

AMINA.

It is with joy I see
How he the world doth grudge the slightest look from me;
I in this envy see how deep my lover's love,
And this proud consciousness doth all my pangs remove.

EGLE.

I pity thee, poor child. No hope for thee remains,
Since thou thy misery lovest; thou dost but shake thy chains;
And makest thyself believe 'tis music.

AMINA.

For this bow
One ribbon still I need.

EGLE (to LAMON).

A little time ago
Thou stolest one from me, at that last feast in May.

LAMON.

I'll fetch it.

EGLE.

Make good haste; return without delay.

SCENE II.

EGLE, AMINA.

AMINA.

He sets but little store on what his love presented.

EGLE.

With his demeanor I myself am not contented.
For playful signs of love too little careth he,
Which please a feeling heart, however small they be.
And yet believe me, friend, the torment is far less
To be too little loved, than worshipped to excess.

Fidelity I prize; 'tis that alone can give
With certainty true calm, to last us whilst we live.

AMINA.

Ah, friend! indeed a heart thus tender is a prize.
'Tis true he grieves me oft, yet pities he my sighs.
If from his lips a sound of blame or wrath is heard,
I've nothing more to do than speak a kindly word,
And straightway he is changed, his anger disappears,
He even weeps with me, when he observes my tears,
Falls humbly at my feet, and begs me to forgive.

EGLE.

And thou forgivest him?

AMINA.

Yes.

EGLE.

What a way to live!
The lover who offends to go on pardoning ever!
Take pains to win his love, and be rewarded never!

AMINA.

What cannot e'er be changed —

EGLE.

Not changed? 'Twould easy be
To alter him.

AMINA.

How so?

EGLE.

I'll teach the way to thee.
The source of all thy griefs, the discontent oppressive
Of Eridon —

AMINA.

Is what?

EGLE.

Thy tenderness excessive.

AMINA.

I thought my plan would love reciprocal engender.

EGLE.

Thou'rt wrong; be harsh and cold, and thou wilt find him
tender.

Just try this course for once, make him some pain endure:
 A man prefers to strive, he cares not to be sure.
 If Eridon should come to spend with thee an hour,
 He knows it but too well, thou'rt wholly in his power.
 No rival is at hand, with whom to disagree,
 He knows thou lovest him far more than he loves thee.
 His bliss is far too great, he well deserves our laughter;
 As he no pangs e'er feels, he needs must pangs run after.
 He sees that in the world thou lovest him alone,
 He doubts, because by thee no doubts are ever shown.
 So treat him that he'll think thou carest little for him;
 He'll storm, indeed, but that will very soon pass o'er him.
 One look from thee will then please more than now a kiss;
 Make him afraid, and he will then soon know true bliss.

AMINA.

Yes, that is very well; but then I'm quite unable
 To carry out thy plan.

EGLE.

Thy courage is unstable.
 Go, thou art far too weak. Look there!

AMINA.

My Eridon!

EGLE.

I thought so. Ah, my poor child! he comes, and thou anon
 Dost shake with joy: that ne'er will do. To make him
 change,
 Thou must, when he appears, a calmer mien arrange;
 That heaving of thy breast! Thy face, too, all aglow!
 And then ——

AMINA.

O let me be, Amina loves not so.

SCENE III.

ERIDON *advances slowly, with his arms crossed.* AMINA
arises and runs to meet him. EGLE *continues sitting over*
her work.

AMINA (*taking him by the hand*).

My own dear Eridon!

ERIDON (*kissing her hand*).

My darling!

EGLE (*aside*).

Ah, how pleasant?

AMINA.

What flowers! Explain my friend, who gave thee such a present?

ERIDON.

Who? My own loved one.

AMINA.

What! my gift of yesterday,
As fresh as they were then?

ERIDON.

Whate'er thou givest, say,
Is it not dear to me? But those I gave thee?

AMINA.

Oh,

I in this festal wreath have placed them.

ERIDON.

Be it so!

Love in each young man's heart, and envy in each maid
Wilt thou excite.

EGLE.

Rejoice to find thy love repaid
By such a maiden's love, for which so many vie.

ERIDON.

I cannot happy be to hear so many sigh.

EGLE.

Thou shouldst be; few men's lot with thine could e'er compare.

ERIDON (*to AMINA*).

Now speak about the fête; will Damon, too, be there?

EGLE (*interrupting*).

That he would present be, I heard him say by chance.

ERIDON (*to AMINA*).

My child, and who will be thy partner in the dance?

(*As AMINA does not answer he turns to EGLE.*)

Take care to choose for her the one she holds most dear.

AMINA.

That cannot be, my friend, since thou wilt not be near!

EGLE.

Now, hear me, Eridon, I cannot bear it more,
Strange pleasure is it thus to plague Amina sore.
Forsake her if thou thinkest that she's no longer true,
But if thou thinkest she loves, this course no more pursue.

ERIDON.

I never plague her.

EGLE.

No? How strange are all thy measures
From jealousy to cast a gloom upon her pleasures,
To doubt, although the fact is known to thee full clearly,
If she —

ERIDON.

Wilt thou be bail that she doth love me dearly?

AMINA.

I love thee not?

ERIDON.

What proof hast thou at thy command?
Who let bold Damon steal a nosegay from her hand?
Who took that ribbon fair which youthful Thirsis brought?

AMINA.

My Eridon! —

ERIDON.

All this was not a dream, methought.
And what was their reward? Thou kisses canst bestow!

AMINA.

Canst thou not, dearest, too?

EGLE.

Oh, peace, he'll nothing know!
Whate'er there was to say thou said'st it o'er and o'er,
He listens for a time, and then complains once more.

And what's the use? If thou his charges shouldst disclaim
He'll go away in peace, and next time do the same.

ERIDON.

With justice, too, perchance.

AMINA.

What! I unfaithful? oh,
Amina false, my friend? Dost thou believe it?

ERIDON.

No!

I cannot, will not.

AMINA.

Say, in all my life did I
E'er give occasion?

ERIDON.

Thou dost oft a cause supply.

AMINA.

When was I faithless?

ERIDON.

Ne'er! Hence all these cares of mine:
Through levity thou err'st, and never by design.
As trifles thou dost hold the things I weighty deem;
The things that vex me most to thee as nothing seem.

EGLE.

Well! If she deems them naught where is the mischief,
pray?

ERIDON.

She often asked the same; it vexes me, I say.

EGLE.

What then? Amina ne'er forgets her own position.

ERIDON.

Too much to deem her true, too little for suspicion.

EGLE.

More than a woman's heart e'er loved she loveth thee.

ERIDON.

And dances, pleasures, games, she loves as much as me.

EGLE.

Who cannot this endure should only love our mothers!

AMINA.

Peace, Egle! Eridon, my joy thy language smothers.
Our friends will tell thee how I think of thee all day,
E'en when we're far from thee, and full of mirth and play;
How oft I with chagrin, that spoils my pleasure, cry,
"I wonder where he is!" because thou art not nigh.
If thou believest me not, O come to-day with me,
And settle for thyself if I'm untrue to thee.
I'll dance with thee alone, I'll never leave thy side,
This arm shall cling to thine, this hand in thine abide.
If my behavior then the least mistrust should wake —

ERIDON.

To keep oneself in check, no proof of love can make.

EGLE.

Behold her falling tears! they're flowing in thy honor;
Ne'er thought I that thy heart so basely looked upon her.
The boundless discontent, incessant and diseased,
Which ever asks for more, the more it is appeased, —
The pride which will not let within thy sight appear
The guileless joys of youth her bosom holds so dear, —
Within thy hateful heart alternately they reign,
Thou heedest not her love, thou heedest not her pain.
She's dear to me, and thou no more shalt treat her ill;
To fly thee will be hard; to love thee, harder still.

AMINA (*aside*).

Ah, wherefore must my heart with love be flowing o'er!

ERIDON

(*standing still for a moment, and then timidly approaching*
AMINA and taking her hand).

Amina, dearest child! Canst thou forgive once more?

AMINA.

Have I not granted oft forgiveness full, complete?

ERIDON.

Thou noble, best of hearts, let me before thy feet —

AMINA.

Arise, my Eridon!

EGLE.

Thy many thanks withhold;
What one too warmly feels, will soon again grow cold.

ERIDON.

And all this warmth of heart with which I honor her —

EGLE.

A greater bliss would be, if somewhat less it were.
More calmly would ye live, and all her pain and thine —

ERIDON.

Forgive me once again, more wisdom shall be mine.

AMINA.

Dear Eridon, now go, a nosegay pick for me;
If gathered by thy hand, how charming it will be!

ERIDON.

Thou hast a rose there now!

AMINA.

Her Lamon gave me this.

It suits me well.

ERIDON (*touchily*).

Indeed —

AMINA.

O take it not amiss,

And thou shalt have it, dear.

ERIDON (*embracing her, and kissing her hand*).

I'll bring thee flowers with speed.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

AMINA, EGLE. *Presently* LAMON.

EGLE.

O poor, good-hearted child, this plan will ne'er succeed!
The more that it is fed, more hungry grows his pride.
Take heed, 'twill rob thee else of all thou lovest beside.

AMINA.

One care alone I have, lest he should not be true.

EGLE.

How charming! One can see thy love is very new.
 'Tis always so at first; when once one's heart is given,
 One thinks of nothing else but love from morn till even.
 If we then, at this time a touching novel read,
 How greatly this one loved, and that one, true indeed,
 That hero soft of heart, so bold when dangers hover,
 So mighty in the fight, because he was a lover,—
 Our head 'gins whirling round, we deem it our own story.
 We fain would wretched be, or covered o'er with glory.
 A youthful heart soon takes impressions from a novel;
 A loving heart still less inclines on earth to grovel;
 And so we long time love, until we find that we,
 Instead of being true, were fools to a degree.

AMINA.

Yet that is not my case.

EGLE.

A patient oft will tell
 The doctor in a rage that he is sound and well.
 Do we believe him? No. Despite his opposition,
 His medicine he must take. And that is thy condition.

AMINA.

'Tis true of children, yes; but 'tis not true of me;
 Am I a child?

EGLE.

Thou lovest!

AMINA.

Thou, too!

EGLE.

Yes, love as we!
 First moderate the storm which hurries thee along!
 One can be very calm, although one's love is strong.

LAMON.

Here is the ribbon!

AMINA.

Thanks!

EGLE.

Thou art a laggard wooer!

LAMON.

I was upon the hill when Chloris called me to her,
And made me deck her hat with flowers ere she dismissed
me.

EGLE.

And what was thy reward?

LAMON.

Mine? None; she only kissed me.
Whatever one may do, no maiden can afford
To give a greater prize than kisses in reward.

AMINA (*showing EGLE the wreath with the loop*).
Is all now right?

EGLE.

Yes, come!

(*She hangs the wreath on AMINA, so that the loop comes on
the right shoulder. In the meantime she talks to LAMON.*)

To-day right merry be!

LAMON.

Right noisy be to-day. We feel not half the glee
When we demurely meet, discussing in full quorum
Our loved one's whims, or else the duties of decorum.

EGLE.

Thou'rt very right.

LAMON.

O, yes!

EGLE.

Amina! Sit thou here!

(AMINA *sits down*. EGLE *puts flowers in her hair, while
she continues.*)

Come, give me back the kiss that Chloris gave thee, dear!

LAMON (*kissing her*).

Most gladly. Here it is.

AMINA.

How very strange ye are!

EGLE.

Were Eridon the same, thou wouldst be happier far.

AMINA.

He ne'er, instead of me, would kiss another maid.

LAMON.

Where is the rose?

EGLE.

When he attempted to upbraid,
She gave it him for peace.

AMINA.

I wish to be polite.

LAMON.

If thou dost pardon him, he'll pardon thee. Quite right!
Yes, each the other plagues in turn, I clearly see.

EGLE.

(As a sign that she is ready with the decoration for the head.) There!

LAMON.

Good!

AMINA.

I wish the flowers were ready now for me
That Eridon should bring.

EGLE.

Do thou await him here.
I'll go and deck myself. Come also, Lamon, dear!
We'll leave thee here alone, but soon be back again.

SCENE V.

AMINA. *(Presently ERIDON.)*

What enviable bliss! O, what a tender swain!
How wish I that it but depended upon me
My Eridon content, myself made blest, to see!
Did I not to his hands such influence o'er me give,
Far happier he would be, and I in peace should live.
If to o'ercome this power I seeming coldness try,
At my indifference he'll into fury fly.
I know his wrath, and dread to feel it; thou, my heart,
Wouldst very badly play so difficult a part.

Yet, if thou wouldst succeed as fully as thy friend,
 And 'stead of serving him, his will to thine wouldst bend,
 To-day's the very time; I never must allow
 The chance to pass . . . He comes! My heart, take courage now!

ERIDON (*giving her flowers*).

They're not so very good, my child! pray, pardon me,
 I gathered them in haste.

AMINA.

Enough, they are from thee.

ERIDON.

They're not so blooming quite, as those fair roses were
 That Damon stole from thee.

AMINA (*placing them in her bosom*).

I'll keep them safely there.

There where thou art enshrined, these flowers should also
 blow.

ERIDON.

If there alone they're safe ——

AMINA.

Hast thou suspicions? ——

ERIDON.

No!

I've none, my child; 'tis fear alone I feel to-day.
 The best of hearts forgets, 'midst merry sport and play,
 When happy in the dance, and at the noisy fête,
 What duty may enjoin, and wisdom may dictate.
 Thou may'st perhaps think of me, when in this joyous vein,
 Yet thou dost not attempt the freedom to restrain
 Which youths allow themselves to practise, bit by bit,
 If maidens but in jest a liberty permit.
 Their idle pride presumes to treat as love ere long
 A pleasant playful mien.

AMINA.

Enough, if they are wrong.

'Tis true that loving sighs pursue me by the score;
 Yet thou dost hold my heart, and say, what wouldst thou
 more?

Poor fellows! upon me thou mightest let them look;
They think that wonder ——

ERIDON.

No, such thoughts I will not brook
'Tis that that vexes me. Well know I thou art mine;
Yet one of them perchance the same thing may opine,
And gaze upon thine eyes, and think to give a kiss,
And triumph in the thought that he has spoiled my bliss.

AMINA.

Destroy his triumph, then! Beloved one, with me go;
Let them the preference see which thou ——

ERIDON.

I thank thee, no.
That sacrifice to claim would show a cruel will;
Thou, child, wouldst be ashamed of one who danced so ill;
I know whom in the dance as partner thou approvest;
The one who dances best, and not the one thou lovest.

AMINA.

That is the truth.

ERIDON (*with restrained irony*).

Ah, yes, I often have regretted
The gifts of Damaris, so light of foot, and petted!
How well he dances!

AMINA.

Yes, none like him in the dance.

ERIDON.

And each maid ——

AMINA.

Prizes him ——

ERIDON.

Adores him for't!

AMINA.

Perchance.

ERIDON.

Perchance? The devil! Yes!

AMINA.

What mean those strange grimaces?

ERIDON.

Thou askest? Thou'lt drive me mad. Thy conduct a disgrace is!

AMINA.

Mine? Art not thou the cause of my and thy great woe?
Oh, cruel Eridon! How canst thou treat me so?

ERIDON.

I must; I love thee well. 'Tis love that makes me vex
thee.

Loved I not thee so much I never should perplex thee.
My feeling, tender heart with ecstasy beats high,
When thy hand presses mine, when on me smiles thine eye.
I thank the gods who give such bliss without alloy,
Yet only I demand that none shall share my joy.

AMINA.

Of what dost thou complain! No others share it now.

ERIDON.

Yet thou endurest them? No hatred feelest thou?

AMINA.

I hate them? Why should I?

ERIDON.

Because they dare to love thee.

AMINA.

A pretty ground!

ERIDON.

I see thou lettest their sighing move thee;
Their feelings thou must spare; and lessened is thy pleasure,
Unless thou ——

AMINA.

Eridon's injustice knows no measure!
Does love require that we humanity should shun?
A heart that truly loves, can hate no other one.
This tender feeling ne'er with such base thoughts can dwell,
Never at least with me.

ERIDON.

Thou vindicatest well
The gentle sex's proud and high prerogative,
If twenty blockheads kneel, the twenty to deceive!

To-day's a day when pride may specially enfold thee.
 To-day thou'lt many see, who as a goddess hold thee;
 Full many a youthful heart will throb for thee right hard,
 Remember me, when swarms of fools around thee run;
 I am the greatest! Go!

AMINA (*aside*).

Fly, weak heart, he has won.
 Ye gods, lives he for naught but to destroy my peace?
 Must my distress still last, and never, never cease?

(*To ERIDON.*)

The gentle bonds of love thou turnest to a yoke:
 A tyrant thou to me, yet I my love invoke!
 With tenderness to all thy wrath have I replied,
 I ever yield to thee, yet thou'rt not satisfied.
 No sacrifice I've spared. Contented ne'er art thou.
 My pleasure of to-day thou claimest? Thou hast it now!
 (*She takes the wreaths out of her hair and from her shoulder,
 throws them away and continues in a restrained calm voice.*)
 Now say, dear Eridon? Thou lovest me better so,
 Than for the feast arrayed? Thine anger now forego.
 Thou wilt not look at me? Remains thy heart still hard-
 ened?

ERIDON (*falling down before her*).

Amina, thee I love! Be my vile conduct pardoned!
 Go to the feast.

AMINA.

My friend, with thee I'd sooner stay;
 A loving song will serve to while the time away.

ERIDON.

Dear child, now go!

AMINA.

Go thou, and quickly fetch thy flute.

ERIDON.

Thou wilt'st it?

SCENE VI.

AMINA.

He seems sad, yet feels rejoicings mute.
In vain wilt thou on him thy tenderness bestow.
He feels my sacrifice? He little heeds it; no,
He deems it but his due. What wouldst thou, my poor
heart?

Thou murmurest in my breast. Deserved I all this smart?
Yes, thou deservest it well! Thou seest he never ceases
To torture thee, and yet thy love for him increases.
I will not bear it more. Hush! Ha, I hear the din
Of music there. My heart doth throb, my foot joins in.
I'll go! My troubled breast my misery proclaims!
How wretched do I feel! My heart with burning flames
Consumes. Off, to the feast! He will not let me move!
Unhappy maiden! See this is the bliss of love!

*(She throws herself on a bank, and weeps; as the others
enter, she dries her eyes and rises.)*

Alas, they now approach! How can I face their jeers!

SCENE VII.

AMINA, EGLE, LAMON.

EGLE.

Make haste! The march begins! Amina! What! In
tears?

LAMON *(picking up the wreaths)*.

The garlands?

EGLE.

What means this? Who tore them off? Confess!

AMINA.

Myself.

EGLE.

Wilt thou not go?

AMINA.

If he will let me, yes.

EGLE.

If who will let thee? Say, why talk in this mysterious
And unaccustomed tone? Be not so shy and serious!
Is't Eridon?

AMINA.

Yes, he!

EGLE.

I thought that it was so.

Thou fool! and will thy wrongs ne'er make thee wiser grow?
Thou hast a promise made that thou with him wilt stay,
And pass in tears and sighs such a delightful day?
He's flattered, child, when thou for all his whims thus
carest.

(After a pause, whilst she makes signs to LAMON.)

Yet thou far better lookest when thou the garland wearest.
Come, put it on! and hang the other o'er thee thus!
Thou'rt charming now.

(AMINA stands with downcast eyes, and lets EGLE have her way. EGLE gives a sign to LAMON.)

But, ah! 'tis fully time for us

To join the march.

LAMON.

Quite right! My dearest child, adieu!

AMINA *(sorrowfully)*.

Farewell!

EGLE *(departing)*.

Amina! now, wilt thou join us, too?

(AMINA looks at her sadly, and is silent.)

LAMON *(taking EGLE by the hand to lead her off)*.

O leave her to herself! With spite I'm fit to die;
The charming dance she'll spoil with her perversity!
The dance both right and left, she knows it all by heart;
I fully thought that she would take her proper part.
She'll stop at home now! Come, I've nothing more to say.

EGLE.

Thou dost forego the dance! I pity thee to-day.
He dances well! Good-bye!

(EGLE seeks to kiss AMINA. AMINA falls on her neck, and weeps.)

AMINA.

Complete is my dismay.

EGLE.

Thou weapest.

AMINA.

My saddened heart in grief despairing sinks!
 I tain would . . . Eridon, I hate thee now, methinks!

EGLE.

He merits it. But no! A lover who e'er hated?
 Love him thou shouldst, nor let thyself be subjugated.
 I long have told thee this. Come!

LAMON.

Join the dance with me!

AMINA.

And Eridon?

EGLE.

Now go! I'll stay! He'll yield, thou'lt see,
 And join thee. Say, would this afford thee any pleasure?

AMINA.

Immense!

LAMON.

Now come! Dost hear the shawm's soft, dulcet measure?
 The charming melody?

(He takes AMINA by the hand, and sings and dances.)

EGLE (*sings*).

If ever a lover with jealousy vile
 Annoys thee, complains of a nod or a smile,
 Accuses of falsehood or other invention,
 Then sing thou, and dance thou, and pay no attention.

(LAMON carries AMINA off with him to the dance.)

AMINA (*as she goes*).

Fail not in thy persuasion!

SCENE VIII.

EGLE, *and presently* ERIDON, *with a flute and songs.*

EGLE

'Tis well! We soon shall see! I long have sought occasion
This shepherd to convert, and make his ways more courtly.
To-day's my wish fulfilled; I'll teach thee manners shortly!
I'll show thee who thou art; and at the least suggestion —
He comes! List, Eridon!

ERIDON.

Where is she?

EGLE.

What a question!

With Lamon yonder, where thou hearest the cornets blow.

ERIDON (*throwing his flute on the ground and tearing the songs*).

Vile infidelity!

EGLE.

Art mad?

ERIDON.

I should be so.*

The hypocrite first tears the garland from her brow
With smiling face, and says: I will not dance, dear, now!
Did I insist on that? And . . . O!

(*He stamps with his foot, and throws the torn songs away.*)

EGLE (*in a composed voice*).

Let me inquire

What right hast thou to make her from the dance retire?
Thou wishest that a heart, which with thy love is filled,
Should know no other joys than those by thee instilled?
Dost think all impulses for pleasure are suppressed,
As soon as thoughts of love pervade a maiden's breast?
Enough, if she to thee her dearest hours will give,
On thee, when absent, think, with thee would ever live.
'Tis folly, then, my friend, in grief to make her dwell;
So let her love the dance, and games, and thee, as well.

* This line in the original contains the only false Alexandrine in the play. — E. A. B.

And if thy maiden e'er, excited by the dance,
 From any fête comes back, and seeks thee, while each
 glance
 Betrays that all her joys imperfect bliss supply,
 While thou, her lover, thou, her own one, art not by;
 If she will then declare one kiss of thine to be
 More than a thousand fêtes: who would not envy thee?

ERIDON (*moved*).

O Egle!

EGLE.

Tremble lest the gods should take amiss
 That one so blest as thou so little knows his bliss!
 Up! Be contented, friend! Or they'll the tears that flow
 From that poor maid, avenge.

ERIDON.

Could I accustomed grow,
 To see how in the dance her hands so many press,—
 While this one ogles her, she looks at that one! Yes,
 When I on this reflect, my heart feels like to break!

EGLE.

What nonsense! What a fuss for trifles thou dost make!
 There's nothing in a kiss!

ERIDON.

A kiss is naught, say'st thou?

EGLE.

Methinks that in his heart there is some feeling now,
 If thus he talks. But say, wilt thou forgive her, friend?
 For when thou art displeased, her sorrow knows no end.

ERIDON.

Ah, friend!

EGLE (*flatteringly*).

This will not do! Thou also art a lover.
 Farewell! (*She takes him by the hand*).
 Thou'rt all aglow!

ERIDON.

My blood is boiling over —

EGLE.

With anger still? Enough! Thy pardon now has she.
 I'll hasten to her straight. She'll trembling ask for thee;

I'll tell her: he is kind; composure this will give her,
Her heart will softer beat, she'll love thee more than ever.

(She looks at him sentimentally.)

She'll surely seek thee out when ended is the feast,
And by the search itself her love will be increased.

(EGLE affects still more tenderness, and leans upon his shoulder. He takes her hand and kisses it.)

She'll find thee presently! O what a moment this!

Press her against thy breast and feel thy perfect bliss!

A maid, when dancing, looks more fair, her cheeks are
glowing.

Her mouth is wreathed with smiles, her loosened locks are
flowing

Over her heaving breast, more tender charms enhance
The beauties of her form, when whirling in the dance;

Her throbbing pulses glow, and as her body sways,

Each nerve appears to thrill and greater life displays.

(She pretends to feel a tender rapture, and sinks upon his breast, whilst he places his arm around her waist.)

The bliss of seeing this what rapture can excel?

Thou'lt go not to the fête, and therefore canst not tell.

ERIDON.

Dear friend, upon thy breast I feel it all too well!

(He falls upon EGLE's neck and kisses her, while she offers no resistance. She then steps back a few paces, and asks in an indifferent tone.)

Lovest thou Amina?

ERIDON.

As myself!

EGLE.

Yet darest thou

To kiss me? Thou shalt pay the penalty, I vow!

Thou faithless man!

ERIDON.

But what dost thou suppose that I —

EGLE.

Yes, I suppose it all. My friend, right tenderly

Thou kissedst me, 'tis true. Therewith I'm well content.

Was my kiss good? No doubt: thy hot lips prove assent.

And ask for more. Poor child! Amina, wert thou here!

ERIDON.

I would she were!

EGLE.

How vain! She'd wretched be, poor dear!

ERIDON.

Ay she would scold me well. Thou must betray me not.
I've kissed thee, but that kiss will not hurt her a jot;
And if Amina give me kisses most enchanting,
May I not feel that thine in rapture are not wanting?

EGLE.

Best ask herself.

SCENE IX.

AMINA, EGLE, ERIDON.

ERIDON.

Woe's me!

AMINA.

I long to see him so!
My own dear Eridon! 'Twas Egle made me go.
Alas, I broke my word; my friend, I'll go not now.

ERIDON (*aside*).

Wretch that I am!

AMINA.

Thou'rt wroth? thy face avertest thou?

ERIDON (*aside*).

What can I say?

AMINA.

Alas! Is all this anger due
For such a little fault? Thou'rt in the right, 'tis true,
And yet ——

EGLE.

O let him go! He gave me such a kiss!
And likes it still.

AMINA.

Kissed thee?

EGLE.

Right tenderly !

AMINA.

Ah, this

Too much is for my heart ! Thy love is thus unsteady ?
 Unhappy I ! My friend deserteth me already !
 Who kisses other maids, his own will shortly fly.
 Ah ! since I thee have loved, like this ne'er acted I ;
 To try to reach my lips, no youth has been so daring ;
 E'en when I forfeits played my kisses have been sparing.
 My heart as much as thine is plagued by jealousy,
 Yet I'll forgive thee all, if thou wilt turn to me.
 And yet, poor heart, in vain art thou so well protected !
 No love for me he feels, since he thy wiles suspected.
 The mighty advocate for thee in vain doth plead.

ERIDON.

What loving tenderness ! How vast my shame, indeed !

AMINA.

My friend, oh, how couldst thou seduce away my lover ?

EGLE.

Be comforted, good child ! Thy woes will soon be over.
 Well know I Eridon, and know that he is true.

AMINA.

And has—

EGLE.

Ay, thou art right, and he has kissed me, too.
 I know how it occurred ; his fault thou mayest condone.
 How deeply he repents !

ERIDON (*falling down before* AMINA).

Amina ! O my own !

Oh, blame her ! she appeared so pretty when I kissed
 Her mouth was very close, and I could not resist.
 Yet, if thou knowest me well, thou pardon must impart ;
 A little joy like that will not despoil my heart.

EGLE.

Amina, kiss him, since he answers so discreetly !
 Despite those little joys, ye love each other sweetly.

To ERIDON.

My friend, thou on thyself must judgment pass this time;
Although she loves the dance, thou see'st that is no crime.

(*Mocking him.*)

If in the dance a youth her hand may chance to press, —
While this one ogles her, she looks at that one, — yes,
Of even this, thou knowest, thou oughtest not to complain
I trust that thou wilt ne'er Amina plague again.
Methinks thou'lt with us go.

AMINA.

Come, join the fête.

ERIDON.

I will;

A kiss has been my cure.

EGLE (*to AMINA*).

Thou'lt take that kiss not ill.
Should jealousy again his bosom seek to kindle,
Remind him of that kiss, and 'twill to nothing dwindle. —
And, O ye jealous ones, if maidens plague you e'er,
Recall *your own* false tricks, and blame them, if ye dare.

REYNARD, THE FOX

I—Goethe

Vol 10

THE END OF THE WORLD

REYNARD THE FOX.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE ACCUSATION.

THE pleasant feast of Whitsuntide was come;
The woods and hills were clad in vernal bloom;
The full-awakened birds, from every tree,
Made the air ring with cheerful melody;
Sweet were the meadows after passing shower;
Brilliant the heaven with light, the earth with flowers.

Noble, the King of Beasts, now holds his Court;
Thither his summoned Vassals all resort;
From North and South they troop, from East and West,
Of Birds and Quadrupeds the First and Best.
The Royal will had been proclaimed, that all
Of ev'ry class should come, both Great and Small,
To grace the pomp of that high festival:
Not One should fail; and yet there did fail One;
Reynard the Fox, the Rogue, was seen of none;
His many crimes from Court kept him away;
An evil conscience shuns the light of day.
To face that grave Assembly much he feared,
For all accused him; no one had he spared:
Greybeard, the Badger, stood his friend alone,
The Badger, who was Reynard's Brother's son.

Beginnt with many a Relative and Friend,
Who aid in war, in peace might counsel lend,
Sir Isegrim, the Wolf, approached the throne,

And with due rev'rence bowing humbly down,
His suit in plaintive accents he began,
And thus his wrathful accusation ran:—

“Most gracious Lord and King! in pity hear!
Let my complaint find favor in Your ear.
Happy the subjects of Your glorious reign;
Here none who seek for justice seek in vain.
Vouchsafe, then, to commis’rate my distress;
For Reynard’s malice grant me some redress.
Me in all ways the Wretch hath wronged and shamed,
My spouse dishonored and my Children maimed
Three lie at home, the youngest born of six,
Befouled and blinded by his filthy tricks.

“’T is long ago my plaint in Court was filed,
Showing by Reynard how I’d been beguiled;
The cunning Fox knew well a plea to draw,
And boldly he presumed to wage his law:
He dared not come at the appointed day;
So I had judgment—and my costs to pay.
All present here can vouch this tale is true;
But none can tell such things as I can do.
Had I the tongues of Angels, lungs of brass,
Whole days and weeks—nay, months and years would
pass

Ere I could mention all my injuries,
Or tell one half his crimes and tricks and lies.
If all the Sheep on earth were killed and flayed
And all their skins were into parchment made,
Not half sufficient were they to contain,
The wrongs whereof I justly could complain:
The worst is the dishonor of my Wife;
That eats away my heart, and sours my life:
Desire of vengeance haunts me, night and day,
And vengeance I will have, come what may.”

He ceased, and stood in silent mood apart,
Gloom on his brow and anger in his heart.
Up jumped a Poodle from a neighboring bench,
Hight Frizpate, who addressed the King in French.
And he complained, it was not long ago,

In winter, when the ground was deep in snow,
That not a single Beast could hunt his prey,
He'd given much in charity away,
And for himself had but one sausage left;
By the false Fox of this he was bereft:
A foul and almost sacrilegious theft!

Scant had he spoken when with fiery eyes,
Tybalt, the Cat, sprang forth in angry wise,
And kneeling cried—"My august and gracious King,
Reynard must answer many a grievous thing:
Most dreaded of all living beasts is he,
Ay, more than e'en Your sacred Majesty.
Grant me Your patience, though; and hear me out:
Frizpate hath little to complain about:
The thing he speaks of happened years bygone;
That sausage ne'er was his; it was my own,
My all, my only remaining sustenance;
I stumbled on it by the merest chance.
I happened once into a mill to creep;
It was deep night; the Miller fast asleep;
Being at that time stinted in my diet,
I took the sausage; why should I deny it?
But Frizpate filched it from me; so that he
Should be the last to speak of robbery."

The Panther then—"These jars are little use;
Reynard's misdeeds admit of no excuse;
He is a Robber and a Murderer;
That, in this Presence I boldly aver.
No kind of crime but he doth exercise;
Nought sacred is there in his impious eyes:
His soul is fixed upon ungodly pelf;
Although the Nobles, nay, the King himself
Should suffer loss of health and wealth and all,
And the whole state to helpless ruin fall,
So he could get the leg of a fat Capon, he
Would never care the value of a half-penny.

"Let me relate the trick he tried to play
To Puss, the gentle Hare, but yesterday;—
Poor Puss, who lives just like an Anchorite,

And never injured mortal Being yet.
 Reynard, who latterly has given out
 That he has turned ascetic and devout,
 Promis'd he'd teach him at the quickest rate,
 How he, as Chaplain, might officiate;
 'The service you shall chant;' quoth he, 'as we do;
 And we'll begin our lesson with the *Credo*!'
 So down they sat together and began;
 For he had no misgivings—the good Man.
 But not long time continued they to sing;
 For, 'gainst the Peace of our dread Lord, the King,
 And setting at defiance all his laws,
 He seized on Puss with his pernicious claws.
 I heard their song as I was passing by,
 And wondered that it stopped so suddenly;
 I'd scarce proceeded though a dozen span, ere
 I took the Felon Reynard with the mainour.
 Fast hold had he of Pussy by the throat,
 That he could scarce articulate one note.
 Certes, at that time had I not come up,
 He'd gone that night in Paradise to sup.
 Yon stands our timid Friend; and in his flesh
 You still may see his wounds all raw and fresh.

"Will not our Sov'reign Lord these ills abate?
 Will you, brave Peers and pillars of the state,
 Such daily breaches of the peace permit,
 Such violations of the Royal writ?
 If there no stop be put to these foul crimes,
 Much, do I fear me, that in future times
 Frequent reproach the King will have to hear
 From all to whom Justice and Right are dear."

Again spake Isegrim: "'T is even so,
 Reynard has ever been the common Foe;
 'T were better he had perished long ago.
 For while that wretch shall live, no rest will be
 For honest, loyal, peaceful Folk, like me.
 Albeit, according to the present fashion,
 The Felon ever meets with most compassion;
 If such crimes pass unpunished, not a year hence

We all shall rue our most unwise forbearance."

Undaunted by his host of angry Foes,
The Badger, Reynard's Nephew, now uprose;
Boldly prepared to plead his Uncle's cause,
All stained with crime and falsehood as he was.

"Now fair and soft, Sir Isegrim," said he;
"Your words smack less of truth than enmity.
'T is known you hate my Uncle; and, in sooth,
A fair word had he ne'er from your foul mouth.
Yet from your malice hath he nought to fear.
In the King's favor stood he now but here,
He'd give you ample reason to repent
Stirring in these stale subjects of complaint.
You take good care too not to say one word
Of ills that he for your sake hath incurred.

Yet many of the Barons here well know
What happened not so very long ago;
When you and he a solemn covenant sware,
That friendship Each should to the Other bear,
And, like true Comrades, Good and Evil share.
I must relate, it is not long to tell,
The strange adventure which that time befell,
When you and he, in the cold winter weather,
Went through the country travelling together.

"It chanced a Carter, on the King's high road,
Was driving homeward with a heavy load;
Your subtle nostrils soon sniffed out 't was fish;
You'd soon have had them if you'd had your wish:
But they were closely packed; and what was worse,
You'd not a single stiver in your purse.

What then did my kind-hearted Uncle do?
Ah! what indeed hath he not done for you?
Down in the road he laid himself for dead:
'T was a bold thought to come into his head!
And when the Carter saw him lying there
To kill him out-an-end did he prepare;
But, cunning Reynard still held in his breath,
Stiff'ning his limbs and counterfeiting death;
'T was a consummate masterpiece of art,

That showed him cool of head as brave of heart;
The Carter picked him up, and pitched him in his cart.
A cap he thought to make out of his skin,
And a bag too to keep his dollars in.
This did my Uncle do for Isegrim:
When would he venture such a risk for him?
While onward went the Carter with his load,
Reynard kept throwing fish down in the road;
And Isegrim, who was in haste to sup,
Fast as he threw them down, gobbled them up.
Reynard grew weary of this sport at last,
And thought 'twas his turn now to break his fast;
So down he sprang; but with disgust and wonder
Found Isegrim had pilfered all the plunder:
He'd stuffed till he was nigh to burst in sunder.
He told my Uncle he had left his share—
But nothing but the heads and bones were there.
“Another of his tricks I must narrate;
And so Heav'n help me, as I truth relate.
A Countryman had lately killed a Swine;
Large were its hams and noble was its chine.
Reynard had found out where the carcase hung
And told it Isegrim with truthful tongue.
And they agreed in common they would toil,
Would share the danger and divide the spoil:
To Reynard's share the danger fell alone;
But of the spoil, forsooth, he'd next to none.
The larder-walls were strong and steep and high;
My Uncle clomb them, though, right skillfully;
True to his word, did he the Porker throw
Out of the window to the Wolf below.
Now, by bad fortune, there were in the grounds
A couple of most ill-conditioned Hounds;
They chased my Uncle with appalling din;
He got away, but not with a whole skin:
And straight unto the Wolf his way did make,
To show what he had suffered for his sake,
And claim his lawful share; then Isegrim
Said he'd reserved the prime tit-bit for him;

And thrusting in his cheek his lying tongue,
Produced the hook by which the Pig had hung.
His feelings Reynard had no words t' express,
But what he felt all present here may guess.

"Scores of such pranks I might remember well,
Were you inclined to hear, and I to tell
But 't is enough: were Reynard summoned here,
Soon would he make his innocence appear

"As for the other charge, 't is most absurd;
You, my dread Liege, and you, my Lords, have heard
What Isegrim has said about his Wife,
Whom 't was his duty to protect with life.
In all its details that affair I know;
It happened now just seven years ago,
That Reynard's bosom first received a wound
From the soft eyes of Lady Gieremund.
My Uncle is not to be blamed at all:
They met together at a fancy ball:
Is'grim had gone upon a tour to Rome:
Husbands, if wise, would always stay at home.
My Uncle proffered her his faith and troth;
She sanctioned his attentions, nothing loth.
Is it not, therefore, a most crying shame,
That her own Lord should sully her fair fame?
What any Man of honor would conceal,
He seems to take a pleasure to reveal.

"What have we next? This trumpery affair,
The Panther has brought up about the Hare.
Such utter trash! what! shall a Master scruple
To chastise a perverse or sluggish Pupil?
If this be so, how are our Youth to be
Trained up in learning and morality?
The wisest book that ever was compiled
Says, if you spare the rod you spoil the child.

"Then we have Mounseer Frizpate, who complains
He was deprived of his ill-gotten gains.
A pretty fuss, forsooth, about a sausage!
'T were better he said nothing of that passage.
For it turns out 't was stolen; and the Thief

Has the assurance now to ask relief.
The evil on his own head has recoiled:
'T is only just the Spoiler should be spoiled.
Is Reynard blamed, that from a Robber he
Has wrung the fruits of his dishonesty?
He did his duty, that deny who can,
Like a true Fox and loyal Gentleman.
Why, had he hanged him on the spot, I ween,
He must assuredly have pardoned been:
But he respects the King's Prerogative,
And therefore spared the Thief and let him live.

"But little justice can my Uncle get;
At least, but little hath he got as yet;
Since the King's Peace was publicly made known,
No one hath led the life that he hath done,
With books he passes half his time away,
And takes but one abstemious meal a day.
Water his only drink, and roots his food;
Poultry and butchers' meat he hath eschew'd,
And cannot bear the very thought of blood;
With whips doth mortify his flesh, and wear
Next to his very skin a shirt of hair.
I heard it mentioned only yesterday,
By one who happened to have passed that way;
His castle, Malepartus, he hath shut,
And in the desert built a Hermit's hut.
So lean and pale and haggard he hath grown,
By his best Friends he scarcely would be known.
But 'tis the burden of a good old song,
That absent Folks are ever in the wrong.
I only wish to Heav'n that he were here;
From all these scandals he would soon be clear."

Scarce had he ceased, when from a neighb'ring hill
A cry resounded, like a clarion shrill.
The voice it was of honest Chanticleer,
Who with his Wives and Concubines drew near;
A dead Hen borne behind him on a bier.
It was the headless corpse of young Greyleg,
As good a Fowl as ever laid an egg;

His fav'rite Daughter of a num'rous brood;
And impious Reynard now had shed her blood.

Foremost the sad and mourning Sire doth stride,
His dappled wings low trailing by his side;
While after him two youthful Cock'rells march,
Each bearing in his grasp a burning torch;
Cantart of one, Cryart the other's name;
'Twixt France and Holland none more known to fame;
They were the Brothers of the murdered Dame.
Four tender Pullets bore their Mother's bier,
Clucking so loud 't was pitiful to ear;
Dire was the clatter, awful were the cries,
And the shrill clamor pierced the startled skies.

Soon as the Heralds silence had restor'd,
Unto the throne stepped up the martial Bird;
O'erwhelm'd with woe he thrice essayed to speak,
And thrice the words died choking in his beak.
Ashamed so chicken-hearted to appear,
He gave one vig'rous crow his voice to clear,
And thus began;—"My Liege and Sov'reign, hail!
With pity listen to my grievous tale:
See upon yonder blood-stained bier,
A proof of Reynard's cruel spite,
And wanton enmity to right,
Partlett, the best and most submissive Wife
That ever solaced a poor Husband's life.
How joyed was I with her and them to rove,
And watch my Offspring full of life and love.
That time no terrors for their lot I felt,
For in complete security we dwelt:
Our home was in a convent's spacious yard,
Whose lofty walls its inmates safely guard;
And six stout Dogs belonging to the farm,
Who loved us well, protected us from harm.

"Reynard, it seems, that lawless Reprobate,
Like Satan, envying our happy state,
Around our Eden often lay in wait.
Stealthily round the walls by night he'd creep,
And through the crannies of the gates would peep.

The trusty Guardians of myself and Wife
Oft made the Ruffian scamper for dear life;
Once they did catch him, and well tanned his hide,
He got away, though sorely scarified;
And for a good while after let us bide.

“But, ah, Sire! now begins my tale of woe:
Again he came, and that not long ago;
Within our convent walls he slyly slunk
Clad in the vestments of a holy Monk,
Wore a long frock, and sandals 'stead of shoes
And looked for all the world like a Recluse.
Water his only drink and roots his food;
All flesh of every kind he had eschewed,
And could not bear the very thought of blood.
But that my Wife and Daughters present were,
He said he would have shown the shirt of hair,
Which he for penance next his skin must wear
And, on the word and honor of a Fowl,
I myself saw the tonsure 'neath his cowl.
Tow'rds him I own I felt my heart relent,
He seem'd so really, truly penitent;
He spoke of his past sins with such compunction,
And of the Heav'nly grace with so much unction.
'Farewell!' at length he cried, 'I needs must go;
'I still have many pious deeds to do;
'I have the Nones and Vespers yet to say,
'And by a dying Vulture's bed to pray.
'He too was a sad Sinner in his day.
'Bless you, my Children, may you ever thrive
'In the calm peace which this World cannot give.'
And saying thus, the odious Hypocrite
Crossing himself departed from our sight.
He left us, all his soul on mischief bent;
While ours were filled with happiest content.

“We ventured forth; and habit, more than fear,
Kept us at first to the old convent near.
Reynard we daily saw near our abode;
It seem'd some bus'ness led him oft that road;
His looks were ever bent upon the ground,

As though his mind were lost in thought profound;
Or, if he chanced our family to see,
It was 'Good'en' and 'Benedicite';
And he would tell his beads and seem to pray,
And smite his breast, and so pass on his way.

"Now, bolder grown, we further went abroad,
In search of pleasure and our daily food.
Ah! fatal error! from behind a bush
Reynard among us made a sudden rush.
Scatt'ring and squand'ring to the left and right,
Tow'rds our old home we took our screaming flight,
In vain, alas! our Foe was there before;
In threat'ning guise he barred us from the door:
With surer aim this time he bore away
Of all my Sons the fairest as his prey:
And I was there, and impotent to save!
My Son! my Son! my Beautiful! my Brave!

"And now he once had tasted of our blood,
It seemed as he disdained all other food:
At all times came he on us—night and day—
Nor Dogs, nor Men, nor gates, kept him away.
Of all mine Offspring I'm well nigh bereft;
Five, out of twenty, all that now are left:
With grief and terror I am all but wild;
Soon he will leave me neither Chick nor Child.
Oh, give me justice! 'twas but yesterday
He tore my daughter from my side away;
Villain! without or pity or remorse:
The Dogs were but in time to save her corse.
See, there she lies! my Child whom Reynard slew!
Help me, or he will have the Others too!
Oh! Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle doo!"

Fierce was the fire that in the King's eye burned,
As to the Badger wrathfully he turned,
And thus began; "Come hither, Sir, and see
This sample of your Uncle's piety!
Now by my royal name I make a vow,
This Miscreant shall not pass unpunish'd so,
If Heav'n preserve my life another year.

But words avail not. Honest Chanticleer,
 I claim the right your inj'ries to redress,
 To share, if not to lessen, your distress.
 Entombed shall your fair Daughter be, with all
 The pomp befits a royal funeral:
 A Vigil shall be sung, a Mass be said,
 The more to honor the illustrious Dead:
 We with our Council will the while take thought
 How may the Murd'rer be to justice brought."

In sable was the Chapel Royal hung;
 The Mass was duly said, the Vigil sung.
 The People, joining with the Quiristers
 Sang *Domino placebo*, verse by verse.
 I could relate who gave each versicle,
 Who the responses; but 't were long to tell;
 And so I pass it by: 't is just as well.

Deep in a grave they laid the honor'd Dead,
 And placed a marble tablet at her head;
 'T was thick, and square, and polished bright as glass,
 With this inscription graven on its face:

GREYLEG THE SPECKLED ONE LIES BURIED HERE
 THE DEAR-LOVED DAUGHTER OF BRAVE CHANTICLEER
 THROUGHOUT THE EARTH 'T WERE VAIN TO SEEK HER
 MATCH

NO HEN COULD OPT'NER LAY OR FEATLIER SCRATCH
 IN REYNARD'S CLUTCH SHE DREW HER LATEST BREATH
 AND PASSED UNTIMELY TO THE REALMS OF DEATH
 LET ALL GOOD MEN HER MURD'RER EXECRATE
 AND SHED A TEAR OF PITY FOR HER FATE.

Meanwhile the King in solemn Council sate,
 Discussing with the Wisest in his state,
 How they the Culprit might to Justice draw
 And vindicate the majesty of Law.
 At length it was resolved, by one and all,
 To send a summons to the Criminal,
 Commanding him, all bus'ness laid aside,
 He should to Court repair, and there his doom abide.

The summons writ and sealed, Bruin, the Bear,
Selected they to be the Messenger;
And him the King addressed; "Sir Bruin, see
That you perform your mission faithfully.
We know you stout of limb and brave of heart;
Yet we would counsel caution on your part;
Courage is oft but a poor match for art.
Reynard, remember, speaks but to deceive;
Neither his lies nor flattery believe,
Or you may soon have too good cause to grieve."
"Fear not, my Liege," the trusty Bear replied,
Confident in his strength and shaggy hide
"Reynard, however tricky he may be,
Will not, I wager, try his tricks on me.
Me or my mission can he treat with scorn,
I'll make him rue the hour that he was born."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE FIRST SUMMONS.

Now with his ragged staff the Bear set forth,
And with his best grease larded the lean earth.
Through the forests vast he went and deserts drear;
But his bold heart knew neither doubt nor fear.
At length the mountain region he approached,
Wherein Sir Reynard generally poached:
But Bruin would not tarry or delay;
Tow'rds Malepartus held he on his way,
The fav'rite fastness of the Robber Chief;
And there he hoped to catch the wily Thief:
Thither for safety usually he fled,
When threat'ning danger overhung his head.

At length Sir Bruin stood before the gate,
And, finding it was shut, he scratched his pate,
Not knowing whether best to go or wait.
Then he began to cry, with mighty din;
"What, cousin Reynard, ho! are you within?
Bruin the Bear it is who calls. I bring
A missive from our Sovereign Lord, the King:
He orders you, all bus'ness laid aside,
Repair to Court and there your doom abide;
That equal right and justice may be done,
And satisfaction given to every one.
I am to fetch you: if you hesitate,
The gallows or the wheel will be your fate.
Better come at once, fair cousin, sith
The king, you know, will not be trifled with."

Reynard, from the beginning to the end,
Had heard this summons; and did now perpend

In what way he might punish his fat Friend.
Into a private corner he had fled,
Where he could hear securely all was said.
His keep was built with many a secret door,
With traps above and pits beneath the floor;
With labyrinthine passages and channels,
With secret chambers and with sliding panels.
There he would often hide, the cunning Hound,
When he was wanted, and would not be found.
Amid this intricate obscurity,
Where none could safely find his path but he,
Full many a simple Beast has lost his way,
And to the wily Robber fall'n a prey.

Reynard suspected there might be some cheat;
For the Deceitful always fear deceit.
Was Bruin quite alone? He felt afraid,
There might be others hid in ambuscade.
But soon as he was fully satisfied
His fears were vain, forth from the door he hied;
And, "Welcome, dearest Uncle, here;" quoth he,
With studied look of deep humility,
And the most jesuitical of whispers,
"I heard you call; but I was reading Vespers.
I am quite grieved you should have had to wait,
In this cold wind too, standing at my gate.
How glad I am you're come; for I feel sure
With your kind aid, my cause will be secure;
However that may be, at least, I know
More welcome nobody could be than you.
But truly 't was a pity I must say
T' have sent you such a long and tedious way.
Good Heav'ns! how hot you are! you're tired to death!
How wet your hair is, and how scant your breath!
Although no slight our good king could have meant,
Some other Messenger he might have sent
Than Bruin, the chief glory of his Court,
His kingdom's main adornment and support.
Though I should be the last to blame his choice,
Who have in sooth no cause but to rejoice.

How I am slandered well aware am I,
But on your love of Justice I rely,
That you will speak of things just as you find them;
As to my Enemies I need not mind them:
Their malice vainly shall my cause assail;
For Truth, we know, is great, and must prevail.

"To Court to-morrow we will take our way:
I should myself prefer to start to-day,
Not having cause—why should I have?—to hide;
But I am rather bad in my inside.
By what I've eaten I am quite upset,
And nowise fitted for a journey yet."

"What was it?" asked Sir Bruin, quite prepar'd,
For Reynard had not thrown him off his guard.

"Ah!" quoth the Fox, "what boots it to explain?
E'en your kind pity could not ease my pain.
Since flesh I have abjured, for my soul's weal,
I'm often sadly put to 't for a meal.
I bear my wretched life as best I can;
A Hermit fares not like an Alderman.
But yesterday, as other viands failed,
I ate some honey,—see how I am swelled!
Of that there's always to be had enough:
Would I had never touched the cursed stuff.
I ate it out of sheer necessity;
Physic is not so nauseous near to me."

"Honey!" exclaimed the Bear; "did you say honey?
Would I could get any for love or money!
How can you speak so ill of what's so good?
Honey has ever been my fav'rite food;
It is so wholesome, and so sweet and luscious;
I can't conceive how you can call it nauseous.
Do get me some on't; and you may depend
You'll make me evermore your steadfast friend."

"You're surely joking, Uncle!" Reynard cried;

"No, on my sacred word!" the Bear replied;
"I'd not, though jokes as blackberries were rife,
Joke upon such a subject for my life."

"Well! you surprise me;" said the knavish Beast;

"There's no accounting certainly for taste;
And one Man's meat is oft Another's poison.
I'll wager that you never set your eyes on
Such store of honey as you soon shall spy
At Gaffer Joiner's, who lives here hard by."

In fancy o'er the treat did Bruin gloat;
While his mouth fairly watered at the thought.

"Oh, take me, take me there, dear Coz," quoth he,
"And I will ne'er forget your courtesy.

Oh, let me have a taste, if not my fill:

Do, Cousin." Reynard grinned, and said, "I will.

Honey you shall not long time be without:

'Tis true just now I'm rather sore of foot;

But what of that? the love I bear to you

Shall make the road seem short and easy too.

Not one of all my kith or kin is there

Whom I so honor as th' illustrious Bear.

Come then! and in return I know you'll say

A good word for me on the Council-day.

You shall have honey to your heart's content,

And wax too, if your fancy's that way bent."

Whacks of a different sort the sly Rogue meant.

Off starts the wily Fox, in merry trim,

And Bruin blindly follows after him.

"If you have luck," thought Reynard, with a titter,

"I guess you'll find our honey rather bitter."

When they at length reached Goodman Joiner's yard,

The joy that Bruin felt he might have spar'd.

But Hope, it seems, by some eternal rule,

Beguiles the Wisest as the merest Fool.

'Twas ev'ning now, and Reynard knew, he said,

The Goodman would be safe and sound in bed.

A good and skilful Carpenter was he:

Within his yard there lay an old oak tree,

Whose gnarled and knotted trunk he had to split;

A stout wedge had he driven into it:

The cleft gaped open a good three foot wide;

Towards this spot the crafty Reynard hied;

"Uncle," quoth he, "your steps this way direct,

You'll find more honey here than you suspect.
In at this fissure boldly thrust your pate;
But I beseech you to be moderate:
Remember, sweetest things the soonest cloy,
And Temperance enhances every joy."

"What!" said the Bear, a shock'd look as he put on
Of self-restraint; "d'ye take me for a Glutton?
With thanks I use the gifts of Providence,
But to abuse them count a grave offense."

And so Sir Bruin let himself be fooled:
As Strength will be whene'er by Craft 'tis ruled.
Into the cleft he thrust his greedy maw
Up to the ears, and either foremost paw.
Reynard drew near; and tugging might and main
Pull'd forth the wedge; and the trunk closed again.
By head and foot was Bruin firmly caught:
Nor threats nor flatt'ry could avail him aught.
He howled, he raved, he struggled and he tore,
Till the whole place re-echoed with his roar;
And Goodman Joiner, wakened by the rout,
Jumped up much wond'ring what 'twas all about;
And seized his axe, that he might be prepar'd,
And danger, if it came, might find him on his guard.

Still howled the Bear and struggled to get free
From the accursed grip of that cleft tree.
He strove and strained; but strained and strove in vain,
His mightiest efforts but increased his pain:
He thought he never should get loose again.
And Reynard thought the same, for his own part;
And wished it too, devoutly from his heart.
And as the Joiner coming he espied,
Armed with his axe, the jesting Ruffian cried:

"Uncle, what cheer? Is th' honey to your taste?
Don't eat too quick, there's no such need of haste.
The Joiner's coming; and I make no question,
He brings you your dessert, to help digestion."

Then deeming 'twas not longer safe to stay,
To Malepartus back he took his way.

The Joiner, when he came and saw the Bear;

Off to the ale-house did with speed repair,
Where oft the Villagers would sit and swill;
And a good many sat carousing still.

“Neighbors,” quoth he, “be quick! In my court-yard
A Bear is trapped; come, and come well prepar’d:
I vow, ’tis true.” Up started every Man,
And pell-mell, helter-skelter off they ran;
Seizing whatever handiest they could take,
A pitch-fork One, Another grasps a rake,
A Third a flail; and arm’d was ev’ry one
With some chance weapon, stick or stake or stone.
The Priest and Sacristan both joined the throng,
A mattock this, the other bore a prong.
The Parson’s Maid came too; Judith her name,
And fair was she of face and fair of fame;
(His Rev’rence could not live without her aid;
She cooked his victuals, and she warmed his bed.)
She brought the distaff she had used all day,
With which she hoped the luckless Bear to pay.

Bruin with terror heard th’ approaching roar,
And with fresh desperation tugged and tore:
His head he thus got free from out the cleft;
But hide and hair, alack! behind he left;
While from the hideous wound the crimson blood
Adown his breast in copious currents flow’d.
Was never seen so pitiable a Beast!
It help him not his head to have releas’d;
His feet still being fastened in the tree,
These with one more huge effort he set free.
But than his head no better fared his paws;
For he rent off alike the skin and claws.
This was in sooth a different sort of treat
From what he had expected there to meet;
He wished to Heav’n he ne’er had ventured there:
It was a most unfortunate affair!

Bleeding upon the ground he could but sprawl,
For he could neither stand, nor walk, nor crawl.
The Joiner now came up with all his Crew:
To the attack with eager souls they flew:

With thwacks and thumps belaboring the poor Wight;
They hoped to slay him on the spot outright.
The Priest kept poking at him with his prong,
From afar off—the handle being long.
Bruin in anguish rolled and writhed about;
Each howl of his called forth an answering shout.
On every side his furious Foemen swarmed,
With spits and spades, with hoes and hatchets armed;
Weapons all wielded too by nerves of pith:
His huge sledge-hammer bore the sinewy Smith.
They struck, they yelled, they pelted and they hallooed;
While in a pool of filth poor Bruin wallowed.

To name these Heroes were too long by half:
There was long-nosed Jem, the bandy Ralph;
These were the worst; but crooked-fingered Jack,
With his flail fetched him many a grievous thwack:
His Step-brother, hight Cuckelson the Fat,
Stood, but aloof, with an enormous bat:
Dame Judith was not idle with her distaff:
While Gaffer Grumble stirr'd him up with his staff;
And Men and Women many more were there,
All vowing vengeance 'gainst th' unhappy Bear.

The foremost—in the noise—was Cuckelson:
He boasted that he was Dame Gertrude's Son:
And all the World believed that this was true;
But who his father, no one ever knew.
Fame indeed said—but Fame is such a Liar,
That Brother Joseph, the Franciscan Friar,
Might, if he chose, claim the paternity;
Or share the same with Others, it might be.

Now stones and brick-bats from all sides were shower'd;
And Bruin, tho' he scorned to die a Coward,
Was by opposing numbers all but overpower'd.
The Joiner's Brother then, whose name was Scrub,
Whirling around his head a massive club,
Rushed in the midst, with execrations horrid,
And dealt the Bear a blow plump on the forehead.
That blow was struck with such tremendous might,

Bruin lost both his hearing and his sight.
One desp'rate plunge he made though, and as luck
Would have it, 'mong the Women ran a-muck.
Ye Saints! how they did scream and shriek and squall!
Over each other how they tumbled all!
And some fell in the stream that ran hard by,
And it was deep just there, unluckily.
The pastor cried aloud—"Look, neighbors, look!
See, yonder—in the water—Jude, my Cook;
With all her wool—she's left her distaff here,
Help! save her! you shall have a cask of beer;
As well as absolution for past crimes,
And full indulgence for all future times."

Fired with the promised boon, they left the Bear,
Who lay half dead, all stunned and stupid there;
Plunged to the Women's rescue; fished out five;
All that had fallen in, and all alive.

The miserable Bear, while thus his Foes
Were busied, finding respite from their blows;
Managed to scramble to the river's brim;
And in he rolled; but not with hopes to swim;
For life a very burden was to him:
Those shameful blows no more he could abide;
They pierced his soul more than they pained his hide.
He wished to end his days in that deep water,
Nor feared t' incur the perils of self-slaughter.
But no! against his will he floated down;
It seemed in truth he was not born to drown.

Now when the Bear's escape the Men descried,
"Oh shame! insufferable shame!" they cried;
Then in a rage began to rate the Women;
"See where the Bear away from us is swimming;
Had you but stayed at home, your proper place,
We should not have encountered this disgrace."

Then to the cleft tree turning, they found there
The bleeding strips of Bruin's hide and hair;
At this into loud laughter they broke out,
And after him thus sent a jeering shout;
"You'll sure come back again, old Devil-spawn,

As you have left your wig and gloves in pawn."

Thus insult added they to injury,
And Bruin heard them and sore hurt was he;
He cursed them all, and his own wretched fate;
He cursed the Honey that had been his bait;
He cursed the Fox who led him in the Snare;
He even cursed the King who sent him there.

Such were his pray'rs as quick he swept along,
For the stream bore him onward, swift and strong;
So, without effort, in a little while,
He floated down the river near a mile.
Then with a heavy heart he crawled on shore,
For he was wet and weary, sick and sore.
The Sun throughout his course would never see
A Beast in such a shocking plight as he.
Hard and with pain he fetched his lab'ring breath,
And every moment looked and wished for death.
His head swam round with a strange sort of dizziness,
As he thought o'er the whole perplexing business.

"Oh, Reynard!" he gasped out, 'Thou Traitor vile!
Oh, Scoundrel, Thief!' and more in the same style.
He thought upon the tree; the jibes and knocks
He had endured; and once more cursed the Fox.

Reynard, well pleased t' have cozened Uncle Bruin,
And lured him, as he thought, to his sure ruin,
Had started off upon a Chicken-chase;
He knew, close by, a tried and fav'rite place.
A fine fat Pullet soon became his prey,
Which in his felon clutch he bore away:

This he devoured, bones and all, right speedily;
And, if the truth be spoken, somewhat greedily.
Prepared for any chance that might betide,
He slowly sauntered by the river side;
Stopping from time to time to take a draught;
And thought aloud, while in his sleeve he laugh'd:

"How pleased I am t' have trick'd that stupid Bear!
Honey he longed for, and has had his share;
I'm not to blame; I warned him of the *wax*;
By this he knows how tastes a Joiner's axe.

I'm glad to have shown him this good turn, as he
Has ever been so good and kind to me.

Poor Uncle! well; by chance should he be dead,
I'll for his soul have scores of masses said.

It is the best methinks that I can do."

While musing thus he chanced to look below;

And saw Sir Bruin on the other shore

Writhing and welt'ring in a pool of gore.

Reynard could scarce, so great was his surprise,

Believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"Bruin alive! and in this place!" quoth he,

"Why, Joiner, what a Booby you must be!

A Bear's hams make the most delicious food!

You could not surely know they were so good.

A dish, by which a Duke would set vast store,

To be so slighted by a stupid Boor!

My friend has left though, I am glad to see,

A pledge for your kind hospitality."

Thus spake the Fox, as he beheld the Bear,

Lying all weary-worn and bleeding there.

Then he called out—"Why, Uncle, is that you?

What upon earth can you have here to do?

You've something at the Joiner's left, I fear,

Shall I run back and let him know you're here?

Prithee, is stolen Honey very sweet?

Or did you honestly pay for your treat?

How red your face is! you have ate too quick;

I trust you have not gorged till you are sick.

Really you should have been more moderate;

I could have got you lots at the same rate.

Nay, I declare—I trust there is no harm in't—

You seem t' have on some sort of Priestly garment;

With scarlet gloves, and collar too, and hat;

Rather a dangerous prank to play is that.

Yet, now I look more close, your ears are gone, sure;

Have you of late submitted to the tonsure,

And did the stupid Barber cut them off?"

Thus did the cruel-hearted Reynard scoff;

While Bruin, all unable to reply,

Could only moan with grief and agony.
No longer could he these sharp gibes sustain,
So crept into the water back again:
He floated downward with the stream once more,
And again landed on the shelving shore.
There in a miserable state he lay,
And piteously unto himself did say;
"That Some one would but slay me here outright!
Ne'er shall I reach the Court in this sad plight;
But on this spot in shame and grief shall die,
A mortal proof of Reynard's treachery.
Oh! I will have a dire revenge, I swear,
If it please Providence my life to spare."

With firm resolve his pain to overcome,
At length he started on his journey home;
And after four long toilsome days were past,
Crippled and maimed, he reached the Court at last.

When the King saw the Bear so sorely maimed,
"Great Heaven! Is this Sir Bruin?" he exclaimed;
"My trusty Messenger in such a state!"

"Ah, Sire!" said Bruin, "and is this the fate
That should a King's Ambassador befall?
But spare my breath—the Fox has done it all."

Then spake the King in wrath; "Now by the Mass,
This outrage vile shall not unpunished pass.
What! shall the noblest Baron of our court
Afford this Traitor means of savage sport?
No; by the sceptre and my crown I swear,
If crown or sceptre I am fit to bear,
Or of stern Justice longer wield the sword,
Right shall be done! Pledged is my royal word."

Summoned in haste the Council promptly sate,
On this fresh outrage to deliberate.
Subject to the King's will, they all agree
That Reynard once again must summoned be;
At Court he should appear; and, if he might,
Answer th' impeachment and defend his right.
Tybalt, the Cat, should now the summons carry,
As he was well known to be wise and wary.

So counselled One and All: the King concurr'd;
And thus to Tybalt spoke his Sov'reign Lord;

"Now mark your mission and the sequence well;
If a third summons Reynard should compel,
He and his whole Race, I have sworn an oath,
Shall feel the deadly power of my wrath.
So let him come in time, if he be wise;
Nor this last warning recklessly despise."

Tybalt replied: "My Liege, I fear that I
Shall scarcely prosper in this embassy;
Not that indeed I ought to say, 'I fear';
To do Your will all danger would I dare:
I merely hint that for this task, of All
I am least fit, being so very small.
If the stout, stalwart Bear was so abused,
What can poor I do? Hold me, pray, excused."

"Nay," said the King, "Wisdom and Wit, 't is known,
Are not the attributes of Strength alone.
How often do we see a little Man
Succeed more neatly than a great one can.
Though not a Giant, you are learned and wise,
And Wisdom compensates for want of Size."

The Cat was flattered and he bowed his head;
"Your will be done, my Sov'reign Liege," he said;
"If on my right I only see a sign,
A prosp'rous journey will, I know, be mine."

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE SECOND SUMMONS.

Not far did Tybalt on his journey get,
Before a Magpie on the wing he met:
"Hail, noble bird;" quoth he, "vouchsafe to 'light,
As a propitious omen, on my right."

The Magpie screeched; his onward way he cleft;
Then stooped his wing and perched on Tybalt's left.

The Cat much serious ill from this forbode,
But on it put the best face that he could.

To Malepartus he proceeded straight,
And found Sir Reynard sitting at his gate.

"Good Even, gentle Cousin," Tybalt said,
"May bounteous Heav'n show'r blessings on your head.
I bring sad news; the King has sent to say,
If you come not to Court without delay,
Not only your own life will forfeit be,
His wrath will fall on your whole Family."

"Welcome, dear Nephew," quoth the Fox; "not less
I wish you ev'ry kind of happiness."

Though thus he spoke, it went against his will;
For in his heart he wished him ev'ry ill;
And thought 't would be the very best of sport
To send him also back disgraced to Court.

"Nephew," said he; for he still called him *Nephew*;
"Step in and see what supper we can give you;
You must be tired; and all physicians tell ye,
You can't sleep soundly on an empty belly.
I am your host for once; you stay to-night;
And we'll to Court start with to-morrow's light.
For you of all my Kindred love I best,

'To you confide myself the readiest.
 That brutal Bear was here the other day,
 Bouncing and swaggering in such a way,
 That not for all the world contains would I
 Myself have trusted in his company.
 But having you my Comrade, travelling
 Will be a very different sort of thing.
 So you will share our potluck, then to bed,
 And off we start by sunrise: that's agreed."
 "Nay," replied Tybalt, "why not go to-night?
 The roads are dry; the moon is shining bright."
 May be, the omen on his mem'ry struck;
 May be, he had no fancy for potluck.

"I am not fond of trav'ling after nightfall;"
 Replies the Fox; "some People are so spiteful;
 Who, though by day they civilly would greet you,
 Would cut your throat, if they by night should meet
 you."

"Well, but," says Tybalt, in a careless way,
 "What have you got for supper if I stay?"

Says Reynard, "Well, I candidly avow,
 Our larder is but poorly stocked just now;
 But we've some honey-comb, if you like that."

"Like such infernal rubbish!" quoth the Cat,
 And spat, and sware a loud and lusty oath,
 As he was wont to do when he was wroth;
 "If you indeed had got a Mouse or so,
 I should much relish them; but honey—pooh!"

"What!" answers Reynard, "are you fond of Mice?
 I think I can procure some in a trice,
 If you are in earnest; for the Priest, my Neighbor,
 Vows that to keep them down is quite a labor;
 In his tithe barn so num'rously they swarm;
 They do him, he declares, no end of harm."

Thoughtlessly said the Cat, "Do me the favor
 To take me where these Mice are; for in flavor
 All other game they beat out of the field;
 Beside the sport which they in hunting yield."

"Well," says the Fox, "now that I know your taste,

I'll promise you shall have a sumptuous feast.
We'll start at once and not a moment waste."

Tybalt had faith and followed; quickly they
Reached the Priest's tithe barn, built with walls of clay.
Only the day before, Reynard a hole
Had through it scratched, and a fat Pullet stole.
Martin, the Priest's young Son—or Nephew rather,
For he was ne'er allowed to call him *Father*,—
Had found the theft out, and, if possible,
Determined to find out the Thief as well;
So, craftily, a running noose he tied,
And fixed it firmly by the hole inside;
Thus hoped he to avenge the stolen Pullet,
Should the Thief chance return, upon his gullet.

Reynard, suspecting something of the sort,
Said, "Nephew dear, I wish you lots of sport;
In at this opening you can safely glide;
And while you're mousing, I'll keep watch outside.
You'll catch them by the dozen, now 'tis dark.
How merrily they chirrup; only hark!
I shall be waiting here till you come back;
So come as soon as you have had your whack.
To-night, whatever happens, we'll not part,
As we so early in the morning start."

Tybalt replies, as any prudent Beast would,
"I've no great faith, I own it, in the Priesthood:
Is't quite safe, think ye?" Reynard answers, "Well;
Perhaps not: 't is impossible to tell;
We'd best return at once, as you're so nervous;
My Wife, I'll answer for it, will not starve us;
She'll toss us up for supper something nice,
If not quite so much to your taste as Mice."

Stung to the quick by Reynard's taunting tongue,
Into the op'ning Tybalt boldly sprung,
And plunged directly in the ready snare:
Such entertainment and such dainty fare
Did the sly Fox for all his Guests prepare.

When the Cat felt the string about his neck,
He gave a sideward spring and got a check;

This made him throw a wondrous somersault,
And, the noose tight'ning, he was fairly caught.
To Reynard then he loudly called for aid,
Who list'ning at the hole in mock'ry said;

“Nephew, how are the Mice? I hope they're fat;
They are well fed enough, I'm sure of that:
If the Priest knew his vermin were your venison,
I'm sure he'd bring some mustard, with his benison;
Or send his son with it,—that best of Boys.
But Nephew, prithee, why make such a noise?
Is it at Court the fashion so to sing
At meals? It seems an inconvenient thing.
Oh! but I wish the gentle Isegrim
Were in your place; how I would badger him!
I stake my tail on't I would make him pay
For all the ill he's wrought me many a day.”

Then off he starts t' indulge some other vice;
No matter what; he was not over nice:
There never lived a Soul, at any time,
More foully tainted with all kinds of crime;
Murder and theft, adultery and perjury;
'T was past the skill of spiritual surgery;
He'd broke the Ten Commandments o'er and o'er
And would as readily have broke a score.

He fancied now some fresh sport might be found
In a short visit to Dame Gieremund;
This he proposed with a two-fold intent;
To learn the grounds of Isegrim's complaint;
And likewise to renew an ancient sin,
Which he especially delighted in.
Is'grim, he knew, was absent at the Court;
And it was common subject of report,
The She-Wolf's passion for the shameless Fox
Had made her Husband's hatred orthodox.

When Reynard to the Wolf's retreat had come,
He found Dame Gieremund was not at home:
“God bless you, my Stepchildren dear:” quoth he;
And to the young ones nods good-humour'dly;
The object of his call he never mentions;

But hastes away after his own inventions.

Dame Gieremund returns at break of day;
"Has no one called here, while I've been away?"
Asks she; her Children answer, "Yes, Mamma:
We've had a visit from our Godpapa,
Reynard; he called us his Stepchildren though;
What did he mean by that?" "I'll let him know;"
Quoth she, and angrily she hurried off,
Determined to avenge this cutting scoff.
She knew where it was likely she should meet him;
And when she found him thus began to greet him:
"Wretch, Monster, Brute!" her rage was quite bewild'-
ring;

"How dare you use such language to my Children?
You, of all Men, t' attack my character!
But you shall dearly pay for it, I swear."

With that she flew at him, and—oh disgrace!
She pulled him by the beard and scratched his face.
Then first he felt the power of her teeth,
As, grappled by the throat; he gasped for breath;
He 'scaped her clutches though, and fled amain;
She, after him; and mark, what happened then.

It chanced a ruined abbey stood in sight,
And thitherward in haste both bent their flight:
A fissure was there in the crumbling wall,
Narrow it was and low and all ways small;
Through this the subtle Fox contrived to pass,
Though hardly, thin and lanky as he was;
My Lady, who was anything but slim,
Rammed in her head and tried to follow him;
But fast she stuck—it seemed Fate helped the Black-
guard,—

And she could neither forward get nor backward.
Soon as the Fox saw how she was confin'd,
Quick he whipped round and fell on her behind;
And not without full many a bitter scoff,
For all she'd done he amply paid her off.
Wearied with vengeance, if not satiated,
The mischief-loving Rogue at length retreated.

And when Dame Gieremund at length got free,
No where in all the neighborhood was he.
Homeward, with tott'ring steps, she then return'd;
While with revenge and shame her panting bosom
burn'd.

Return we now to Tybalt; when he found
How in that slipknot durance he was bound,
That strength and struggling nothing might avail,
After the mode of Cats, he 'gan to wail.
This Martin heard, and swift sprang out of bed:
"The Lord be praised;" the spiteful Urchin said,
"The Thief is caught that stole our Hen away;
And, please the pigs, he shall the piper pay;
And that right dearly too, if but the noose hold:"
Then struck a light and woke up all the Household;
Both old and young, and great and small,
Forthwith assembled there.

The Priest himself, in morning gown
Thrown loosely round him, hurried down,

And ran to join the throng:
A pitchfork's double steel he bore—
His faithful cook-maid went before,

For she was bold and strong.—
Stout Martin too, a cudgel plies,
And knocks out one of Tybalt's eyes;
Meanwhile the Parson, with his fork,
Thrusts, hacks, and hews, like any Turk,

Poor Tybalt thought to die!
But frantic both with rage and pain,
'Neath the Priest's robe he dash'd amain;
And there revenged in cruel way,
The wounds he'd suffer'd in the fray,
And his extinguished eye.

The Parson roll'd upon the ground,
Lamenting loud his frightful wound,
And terror seized on all around,

While loud the cook-maid vow'd;—
The devil's self was in the beast,
And she'd give all that she possest,

Nay (if she had it), gold in store,
The Parson had his own once more:—

Meanwhile the others crowd,
To bear their master to his bed,
Leaving the luckless Cat for dead.
But Tybalt woke from out his swoon
And found his enemies were gone:
He set to work with might and main
And gnawed the hateful cord in twain.

He hastened on his road, in shame and sorrow,
Towards the Court, and reached it on the morrow.
And bitterly did he himself upbraid:
“Me! to be so completely gulled!” he said;
“How shall I ever show my face for shame,
All batter’d as I am, half blind, and lame?
The very Sparrows in the hedge will cry out,
‘There you go, Master Tybalt, with your eye out!’”

Who shall describe the wrath King Noble felt,
When at his feet the injured Tybalt knelt?
He swore the Traitor vile should die the death:
His Council in all haste he summoneth:
The Lords Spiritual and Temporal
Assembled in obedience to his call:
And the King said—He wished it to be known
He would maintain the honor of His Crown;
That is, so it were done consistently
With the true principles of liberty:
But something must at once be done to stem
Rebellion; and He left it all to them.—
Judgment, ’t was moved, against the Fox should pass,
he

Being doomed at once to death for contumacy.

The Badger, seeing what a storm was brewing,
How all conspired to work his Kinsman’s ruin,
Thus spake: “My Liege, it boots not to deny;
These charges press on Reynard grievously
But Justice follows one eternal plan
Remember, Sire, the Fox is a Free Man;
The Law in such a case is most precise,

Requiring that he should be summoned thrice:
If then he fail, there is nought more to say;
But Law and Justice both must have their way."

"Ha!" said the Monarch sternly, "say you so?
Where shall be found the Messenger to go?
Who hath an eye too many? who will stake
His life and limbs for this bad Traitor's sake?
'Gainst Reynard's cunning who will wage his wit?
I doubt if any one will venture it."

The Badger answered, "I will venture Sire;
And undertake the task, if You desire
Happen what may. Whether 't is better, I
A summons bear straight from Your Majesty;
Or of my own accord appear to go:
Whichever You think best, that will I do."

"Go then! so let it be;" the Monarch said;
"You know what crimes to Reynard's charge are laid;
You know too all his malice; so beware,
Your Predecessors' fate lest you may share."

Greybeard replied, "I trust I may prevail;
But shall have done my duty, if I fail."

Away to Malepartus doth he hie;
Finds Reynard with his Wife and Family;
And greets him; "Save you, Uncle: I can't tell
How charmed I am to see you look so well.
E'en let your Enemies say what they can,
You're a most extraordinary Man:
Prudent and wise and wary as you are,
Yet the King's wrath so scornfully to dare.
You'd best be warned in time: on every side
Are ill reports against you multiplied.
Take my advice; with me to Court away
'T will help you nothing longer to delay.
You're charged with almost every sort of crime;
You're summoned now to-day for the third time,
And surely sentenced if you fail t' appear:
The King will straightway lead his Barons here;
And what can you expect will then befall?
You will be ta'en and hanged: nor is that all:

Your fortress razed, your children and your Wife
Cruelly butchered, or enslaved for life.
From the King's wrath you cannot hope to flee;
Better then, surely, to return with me.
You need not dread to stand before your Judges;
You're never at a loss for cunning dodges:
With your consummate skill and artifice,
You've got thro' many a scrape, and will thro' this."

Thus Greybeard spake, and Reynard thus replied;
"Your counsel, Nephew, shall my conduct guide:
I were to blame, should I your warning slight;
I will to Court; and Heav'n defend the right;
The King besides, I trust, some grace may show;
The use I've been to him he well doth know;
That for no other cause than this I'm hated,
And, save your presence, like a Badger baited.
The Court would go to pieces but for me;
I don't pretend that from all blame I'm free;
But were I ten times deeper in disgrace,
Could I but see my Sov'reign face to face,
And come to speech with him, I would engage
To soothe the transports of his Royal rage.
Many 't is true may at his council sit;
But many heads have oft but scanty wit:
When they get fixed in one of their deadlocks,
To whom send they for aid, but to the Fox?
No matter how involved the case may be,
They find it smooth and easy, thanks to me.
For this I meet with envy; even those
I most befriend turn out my bitt'rest foes;
But moralists agree 't is not more hateful,
Than it is natural, to be ungrateful.
'T is this I have to fear; for well I know
My death they have intended long ago.
Ten of the mightiest Barons in the land
My utter downfall seek—a pow'rful band:
Can I alone such odds as these withstand?
'T was only this kept me from Court, I vow;
But I agree 't were best to go there now.

By far more honorable that will be,
 Than bring my dearest Wife and Family,
 By tarrying here, into disgrace and trouble;
 For that would only make the mischief double.
 And of the King I stand in wholesome awe,
 His arm is mighty and his will is law.
 Mine Enemies perchance by courtesy
 I may subdue; at least I can but try."

Then to his Wife, who stood with weeping eyne,
 He turned and said—"My gentle Ermelyne,
 Be mindful of our Children; yet I know
 You need no hint from me to make you so.
 Our youngest, Greykin, will most care require;
 He'll be the living image of his Sire,
 If these convulsions do not stop his breathing,
 And by Heaven's blessing he survive his teething.
 And here's this cunning little rascal, Russell,
 He thro' the world will manage well to bustle;
 His pluck may get him into many a scrape,
 His craft will ever teach him how to 'scape;
 I love him well, and have no fear for him;
 He'll be a match, I ween, for Isegrim
 And all his Brood. And now, farewell, dear Chuck;
 When I return, as, have I any luck,
 I soon shall do, I'll prove me sensible
 Of all your kindness: so once more, farewell."

Then from his home with Greybeard he departed;
 And sad he felt in spirit and down-hearted;
 And sad too, grieving for her mate and sick son,
 Was the leal soul of Ermelyne, the Vixen.

Reynard nor Greybeard neither silence brake
 For near an hour; then thus the former spake:

"Ah, Nephew, heavy is my soul to-night;
 For, truth to speak, I'm in a mortal fright;
 My frame with strange forebodings shuddereth;
 I feel assured I go to certain death;
 My conscience sinks 'neath mine enormities;
 You little think how ill I am at ease.
 Will you, dear Nephew, my confession hear?

There is, alas! no reverend Pastor near:
Could I but of this load my bosom free,
I then should face the King more cheerfully."

"Confession certes benefits the soul,"

Quoth Greybeard, "but you must confess the whole;
All treasons, felonies and misdemeanors,
However great—and great, no doubt, have been yours."

"Yea," answered Reynard, "I will nought conceal;
List then, oh, list, while I my crimes reveal.
Confiteor tibi, Pater—" "Nay, no Latin!"

Quoth Greybeard: "'t is a tongue I'm nowise pat in.
It would not much avail you to be shriven,
If I knew not the sins I had forgiven."

"So be it then," the Fox rejoined; "I ween
A very wicked sinner I have been;
And I must do what penance you enjoin
To save this miserable soul of mine.
The Otter, and the Dog, and many more,
With many a trick I have tormented sore:
Indeed of living beasts there scarce is one
To whom I've not some turn of mischief done.
Mine Uncle Bruin I beguiled of late;
With honey he prepared his maw to sate;
I sent him back with bloody paws and pate:
And Cousin Tibby, he came here to mouse;
I cozen'd him into a running noose,
And there, I'm told, an eye he chanced to lose.
But I must say the fault was somewhat theirs;
They should have minded more the King's affairs,
With justice too complains Sir Chanticleer;
I ate his chicks—and very good they were.
Nay, with unfeigned repentance I must own
I have not spared the King upon the throne;
And, Heaven forgive me for it! even the Queen
Has not been safe from my malicious spleen.
But most I've outraged Isegrim, the Wolf;
'Twixt him and me yawns an abysmal gulf.
Him I've disgraced in every way I could;
And if I might have done so more, I would.

I've even called him Uncle, as a gibe;
For I'm no kin to any of his tribe.

"He came to me about six years ago;
I lived then in the cloister, down below;
He sought my help a Monk to get him made:
His fancy was to toll the bells, he said;
He loved the sound so much: so with a loop,
I fastened his fore-feet into the rope:
He was delighted, and began to toll—
'T was a great bell—with all his heart and soul;
But not much credit did his efforts win;
For he kicked up such an infernal din,
Out rushed the People when the noise they heard,
Thinking some dread mishap must have occur'd.
They came and found my friend the Wolf; and ere
His purpose to turn Monk he could declare,
They fell to work and so belabored him,
'T was all but up with Master Isegrim.

"The Fool was still unsatisfied; still craved
To be a Monk and have his noddle shaved;
With a hot iron then I singed his poll,
Till the swart skin all shriveled on his skull.
Ah! many are the blows and thumps and kicks
That he has been regaled with through my tricks.
I taught him the best manner to catch Fish;
And he caught just as many as I'd wish.

"Once, when in partnership we chanced t' engage,
We groped our way into a parsonage;
Well stored the larder was of the good Priest,
For he was rich and amply benefic'd.
Bacon there was and ham's more than enough,
And lots of pork lay salting in a trough.
Is'grim contrived to scratch the stone wall through,
And crept in at the hole with much ado,
Urged on by me and his own appetite;
For with long fasting he was rav'nous quite.
I did not follow, as I had some doubt
How, if I once got in, I might get out.
Isegrim gorged till chuck-full to the eyes,

And swell'd to nearly twice his former size;
So that, although he strove with might and main,
He could not for his life get out again.
'Thou lett'st me in,' he cried, 'oh, faithless hole!
Empty, and will not let me out when full.'
Away I hastened; raised a loud alarm,
On the Wolf's track in hopes the Boors might swarm.
Into the Parson's dwelling then I run;
And find him to his dinner sitting down,—
A fine fat capon just brought on the tray,—
This I snapped up, and with it stole away.
Up rose the Priest in haste and overthrew
The table with the food and liquors too;
On every side the glass and crockery flew.
'Kill him!' call'd out th' enraged Ecclesiastic;
'Oh! that the bones in his damn'd gullet may stick!'
Then, his feet catching in the cloth, he stumbled,
And all among the mess and fragments tumbled.
But loudly he continued still to bawl:
The hubbub brought the Household, one and all.
Away I sped, as fast as I could go;
They after me, with whoop and tally-ho:
The Parson shouting loud as he was able,
'The Thief! he's stole my dinner from my table!'
I ne'er until I reached the pantry, stopped;
But there, ah, well-a-day! the fowl I dropped;
I could not longer toil beneath its weight,
But lightened of my load escaped by flight.
The Parson, stooping to pick up the fowl,
Spied Master Is'grim stuck fast in the hole:
'Halloo!' he cried, 'halloo! come here, my friends!
'See what a scapegoat righteous Heaven sends!
'Here's a Wolf caught; if he should get away
'We were disgraced forever and a day.'
The Wolf no doubt wished he'd ne'er seen the larder;
Meanwhile their blows rained on him harder and harder;
And many a grievous thump and kick and thwack
He got upon his shoulders, sides and back;
And all the while, as if the Devil stirr'd them,

They yelled and screamed and swore—I stood and heard them.

At length it seemed all up with Isegrim;
He swooned; and then they left off beating him.
I'd lay a bet he never had before
His hide so curried, and will never more.
'T would make an altar-piece, to paint the way
They made him for the Parson's victuals pay.
At length out in the street for dead they threw him;
And over shards and pebbles rough they drew him:
Then flung him, as no signs of life he show'd,
Into a stagnant ditch beside the road,
And left him buried there in slime and mud.
How he recovered's more than I can tell;
It almost seems a sort of miracle.

“Yet after this, about a year, he swore
To be my Friend and firm Ally once more:
I cannot say his word I quite believed;
I felt that one of us would be deceived.
I soon found out his object was to get
A meal of Fowls on which his heart was set.
I told him of a rafter, where there us'd
A Cock with seven fine fat Hens to roost.
It was past twelve o'clock, one cloudy night
When moon and stars gave not one ray of light,
I took him to a house I'd known before,
Where was a window on the second floor;
The lattice shutter by good luck stood ope;
To this along the wall we slily crope;
And, being never barren in expedients,
I prayed mine Uncle he would take precedence:
'Go boldly in,' I whispered; 'do not fear;
'You never saw such Fowls, as you'll find here:
'I'll warrant, you ne'er finer met or plumper;
'I'd lay my life you'll carry off a thumper.'
Cautiously in he stole, while I stayed out;
And here and there he 'gan to grope about:
But before long in tones subdued he said,
'Reynard, by all that's Holy, I'm betrayed;

'You've led me, I suspect, a wildgoose chase:
'Of Fowls I find not the remotest trace.'
'The foremost I've long had,' said I; 'you'll find
'The others just a little way behind:
'You'd better make your way across the rafter;
'Don't be afraid; I'll follow closely after.'
This rafter now was anything but broad
And no ways suited to sustain a load;
And Isegrim was fain to use his talons
In order any how to keep his balance.
Out of the window I contrived to back,
And then slammed to the shutter in a crack;
It jarred the rafter, and the Wolf fell plump, ere
He could restore himself, a monstrous thumper.
Thus was again my prophecy fulfill'd;
In such prophetic warnings am I skill'd.
The Housecarles, who around the chimney dozed,
Were, by his heavy fall, from slumber roused;
'What's that fall'n from the window?' cried they all,
And lit the lamp and searched about the hall;
And in a corner found they Isegrim;
Good Saints in Heav'n! how they did punish him!
Yet somehow he contrived to get away
With a whole skin, but how I cannot say.

"I must confess, too, even though it wound
A lady's honor, with Dame Gieremund
I've oftentimes committed mortal sin:—
It is so hard to stop when you begin.
This fault with deep contrition I deplore,
And trust I never may be tempted more.

"Such are my sins, O Father! if not all,
At least I have confessed the principal.
I pray for absolution, and submit
To whatsoever penance you think fit."

Then Greybeard shook his head, looked wise and big;
And from a neighb'ring bush plucked off a twig.
"My Son," quoth he, "this rod receive; with it
Three times your back in penance must you smite;
Next, having laid it gently on the ground,

Three times across it must you gravely bound;
Lastly, in humble and obedient mood,
Three times with rev'rence must you kiss the rod.
This done, I pardon and absolve you quite,
And every other punishment remit."

This penance cheerfully by Reynard done,
Greybeard resumed; "Let your good works, my Son,
Prove the sincerity of your repentance.
Read psalms, and learn by heart each pious sentence;
Go off to Church; mind what the Pastor says;
And duly fast on the appointed days;
Show those, who seek, the right path; from your store
Give willingly and largely to the poor;
And from your heart and soul renounce the Devil
And all his works, and ev'ry thought of evil.
So shall you come to Grace at last." "To do
All this," said Reynard, "solemnly I vow."

The shrift now ended, tow'rd the Court they bent
Their steps,—the Confessor and Penitent
In seeming meditation wrapt: their way
Through pleasant woods and fertile pastures lay.
On their right hand an ancient cloister stood,
Where holy women of religious mood,
Passed a pure life in social solitude.
Stored was their yard with Cocks and Hens and Chick-
ens,

Who often roamed abroad in search of pickings.
Reynard, when not with weightier matters busied,
Would pay them frequently a friendly visit.
And now to Greybeard did he turn and say,
"By yonder wall you'll find our shortest way."

He did not mean exactly what he said;
His Confessor towards the wall he led;
While greedily his eyes rolled in his roguish head.
One Cock'll notes he in particular,
Who plump and proud was strutting in the rear:
On him pounced Reynard sudden from behind,
And made his feathers scatter in the wind.

While the Fox licked his disappointed chaps,

Greybeard incensed at such a sad relapse,
Exclaimed, "Alas! alas! what have you done?
Is this your penitence, unworthy Son?
Fresh from confession, for a paltry Fowl
Will you so peril your unhappy soul?"

Said Reynard, "You rebuke me as you ought:
For I have sinned in truth, tho' but in thought,
Pray for me, dearest Nephew, pray to Heaven,
With other sins that this may be forgiven.
Never, oh! never more will I offend."

The cloister passed, the highway they regain'd:
Their pathway lay across a narrow nook:
The Fox behind cast many a longing look
Towards those tempting Fowls; it was in vain
He strove his carnal yearnings to restrain.
If any one had then struck off his head,
Back to the Fowls it must perforce have fled.

Greybeard said sternly, "Whither doth your eye
Still wander? This is hateful gluttony."

Quoth Reynard, "You quite misconceive th' affair;
You should not interrupt me when in pray'r.
Let me conclude my orisons for those
Whose souls I've sent to premature repose;
Their bodies to my maw a prey were given:
For thus accomplished was the will of Heaven."

Greybeard was silent; Reynard did not turn
His head, while yet the Fowls he could discern.

They've left the cloister now behind them quite:
They near the Court: the Palace is in sight:
Reynard's bold heart beats faintly in his breast:
So grave the charges that against him prest.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE TRIAL.

SOON as 't was known by general report
Reynard was really coming to the Court,
Out they all rushed in haste, both Great and Small,
Eager to see the famous Criminal:
In flocks and herds and droves they thronged to meet
him,

But scarce did one with word of welcome greet him.

Reynard cared little though for this: he thought—
Or seemed at least to think—it mattered nought.
With Greybeard on indiff'rent things he talked
As, bold as brass, along the street he walked;
He could not, had he been the King's own Son,
Free from all crime, with prouder step have gone:
And so before the King and all his Peers
He stood, as though he felt nor doubts nor fears.

"Dread Lord and gracious Sov'reign!" thus said he,
"For ever gracious have you proved to me;—
Therefore I stand before You, void of fear,
Sure that my tale with patience you will hear;—
A more devoted Servant to the Crown,
Than I have been, my Liege hath never known:
'T is this brings me such hosts of Enemies,
Who strive to work me mischief in Your eyes;
And bitter reason should I have to grieve,
Could You one half their calumnies believe.
But high and just and righteous all Your views are;
Your hear the Accused, as well as the Accuser;
Howev'r behind my back they slander me,
You know how great is my integrity."

"Silence that lying tongue!" the Monarch cries,

“Nor think to veil your crimes with sophistries.
 In one career of vice your life is spent;
 It calls aloud to Heav’n for punishment.
 How have you kept the peace that I ordained
 Throughout My kingdom’s breadth should be main-
 tained?”

Yon mourns the Cock, disconsolate with grief;
 His Children slain by you, false-hearted thief!
 You boast of your devotion to the Crown,
 Is’t by your treatment of My Servants shown?
 Bruin, by your devices, hath been lamed;
 My faithful Tybalt so severely maimed,
 The Leech doubts if he may his health restore—
 But I will waste My words on you no more;
 Lo! your Accusers press on every side;
 All further subterfuge seems now denied.”

“Ah! Sire,” rejoined the Fox, “am I to blame
 My Uncle Bruin has returned so lame?
 Or is it my fault he has tastes so funny,
 He must needs pilfer honest People’s honey?
 What if the Peasants caught him in the fact,
 And, ’spite his size and strength, he got well whack’d?
 I could not help it, nor could succor him;—
 In sooth ’t was lucky he knew how to swim.
 Then as for Tybalt, when he came to me,
 I shewed him ev’ry hospitality.
 Gave him the best I had; but not content,
 His mind was wholly upon thieving bent:
 He scorned my larder, and would poke his nose in
 The Parson’s granary to go a mousing,
 In spite of all my caution and advice—
 It seems he has a strange penchant for Mice.
 Shall I be punished because they were Fools?
 Does that comport with Justice’ sacred rules?
 But You will do Your royal will I know;
 And I must e’en submit for weal or woe:
 Whether I am imprisoned, tortured, martyred,
 Burnt or beheaded, or hung, drawn and quartered;
 So it must be, if so it be You list:

Your pow'r is great, how can the Weak resist?
Tho' to the State small good my death will bring;
I shall at least die loyal to my King."

Up spake the Ram then, "Friends, the time is come;
Urge now your complaints, or evermore be dumb!"
Then, all confederate for Reynard's ruin,
Stept Tybalt forth, and Isegrim, and Bruin;
And other beasts came swarming by the score,
The thin-skinn'd Roebuck and the thick-skinn'd Boar,
Neddy the Donkey too, and many more.
Frizzy the Poodle also, and the Goat,
The Squirrel, and the Weasel, and the Stoat;
Nor did the Ox or Horse fail to appear;
And Beasts of savage nature too were there;
The flitting Rabbit, and the nimble Hare.
The Swan, the Stork, the Heron and the Crane;
All thither flew, all eager to complain.
Sibby the Goose, with angry hissing, came,
And the Duck Quackley, who was sadly lame;
And Chanticleer, that most unhappy Cock,
Whose sorrows might have touched a heart of rock,
With the few Children that to him were left,
Accused the Fox of murder and of theft.
In countless flocks came swarming in the Birds,
The Beasts in vast innumerable herds;
All vehement alike on vengeance bent,
All clam'rous press'd for Reynard's punishment.
Charge upon charge there followed, thick and fast,
And each fresh plaint more weighty than the last.
Since Noble sat upon his Father's throne,
Was never yet such a Grand Oyer known;
Indeed so num'rous the complainants were,
It seemed an Oyer with no Terminer.

Meanwhile the Fox conducted his defence
With most consummate skill and impudence;
One time a Witness he would browbeat so,
That what he said the poor man scarce should know;
Or else repeat his answers in a tone,
Which gave a sense quite diff'rent from his own;

Or interrupt with some facetious jest,
Or tell a story with such hum'rous zest,
That, serious things forgotten in the sport,
They laugh'd the Prosecutor out of Court.
And when he spoke, Truth seemed to tip his tongue,
Indignant as each charge aside he flung;
They heard with wonder and diversion blent,
Almost disposed to think him innocent;
Nay, some there were who more than half believed
He was himself the Party most aggrieved.

At length came Witnesses who stood so high
For unimpeachable veracity,
That all his crimes and outrages, as clear
As is the sun at noon, were made appear.
The Council all agreeing, with one breath,
Pronounced him guilty and condemned to death;
Bound, to the gallows he should thence be led,
And hanged there by the neck till he was dead.

And Reynard now gave up the game for lost;
His skill had served him for display at most;
And as the King himself his doom pronounced,
All hope of mercy he as vain renounced;
For seized and pinioned, hopeless was his case,
With ignominious death before his face.

As there he stood, disgraced, disconsolate,
His Foes bestirred themselves to speed his fate
His Friends the while in silent awe stood round;
Great was their trouble, and their pain profound;
Martin the Ape, Greybeard, and many more,
Who to the hapless Culprit kindred bore
The King's will they respected as they ought;
But sorrow'd all—more than one might have thought:
For Reynard was a Peer of high degree,
And now stood stripped of every dignity;
Adjudged to die a death of infamy.
A sight indeed to make his Kinsmen grieve;
Then of the King they one and all took leave,
And left the Court, as many as were there;
Reynard's disgrace they had no mind to share.

The King was sore chagrined though in his heart,
To see so many Peers and Knights depart:
It proved the Fox had some Adherents still
Too much disposed to take his sentence ill.
Then turning to his Chancellor, he said,
"Though Reynard's crimes his doom have merited,
'Tis cause for anxious thought and deepest care
How we his num'rous friends from Court may spare."

But Bruin, Isegrim and Tybalt, all
Were busied round the luckless Criminal.
Anxious to execute the King's decree,
They hurried forth their hated Enemy,
And onward hastened to the fatal tree.
Thus to the Wolf then spake the spiteful Cat:
"Sir Isegrim, you've now got tit-for-tat;
You need not be reminded, I'll be sworn,
Of all the wrongs from Reynard you have borne.
You'll not forget, unless your heart's grown callous,
He had your Brother hanged on that same gallows,
And taunted him with many a biting scoff;
In his own coin you now can pay him off.
Remember too the foul trick you were played,
Sir Bruin, when by Reynard's craft betrayed
To that base Joiner and his rabble Crew;
The insults you received, the beating too;
Besides the deep and scandalous disgrace
To be the talking-stock of every place.
Keep close together then and have a care;
Lest he slip off before one is aware:
For if, by any artifice or chance,
He now contrive to 'scape our vigilance,
We shall remain eternally disgrac'd,
Nor ever shall the sweets of vengeance taste."

Quoth Isegrim, "What boots it chattering so?
Fetch me a halter without more ado.
A halter, ho! and see that it be strong:
We would not have his suff'ring last too long."
Thus against Reynard did they vent their wrath,
As tow'ards the gibbet they held on their path.

He'd heard all they had said, and not yet spoke;
But now, with sidelong leer, he silence broke;

"If you a halter want, Tybalt's the man
To fit you one upon the newest plan;
He knows how best to make a running noose,
From which one cannot possibly get loose;
He learnt it at the Parson's granary,
Where to catch Mice he went, and lost an eye.
But, Isegrim! and Bruin! why pretend
Such zeal to hasten your poor Uncle's end?
In sooth it does not to your credit tend."

Now rose the King, with all his Lords, to see
Justice was done with due solemnity;
And, by her courtly Dames accompanied,
The Queen herself walked by the Monarch's side:
And never was there seen a Crowd so great
As followed them to witness Reynard's fate.

Meanwhile Sir Isegrim his Friends besought
To march close packed, and keep a sharp lookout;
For much he feared, lest by some shifty wile
The Fox might yet their watchfulness beguile:
And specially did he conjure his Wife;
"See that the Wretch escape not, on thy life;
If he should this time slip from out our pow'r,
We ne'er should know another peaceful hour.
Think of your wrongs;" thus Bruin he addressed;
"And see you pay them with full interest.
Tybalt can clamber; he the rope shall fix;
You hold Sir Reynard tight, and mind his tricks:
I'll raise the ladder, and you may depend on't
In a few minutes we shall make an end on't."

Quoth Bruin, "Quick! and get the ladder plac'd:
I'll warrant me I'll hold the Ruffian fast."

"Why should you take," again thus Reynard saith,
"Such pains to expedite your Uncle's death?
You know, the more the haste, the worse the speed.
Ah! sad and cruel is my lot indeed,
To meet with hate from such old Friends as you!
I know 't were vain, or I for grace would sue.

Stern Isegrim hath e'en compelled his Wife
Join this unkindly plot against my life:
Her memories of the past might surely wake
Some feelings of compassion for my sake:
But when you can foretell to-morrow's wind,
Then trust the constancy of Womankind.
But if so be it must; so let it be.
The sooner done, the sooner I am free.
My fate will but with my poor Father's match;
Albeit, good Soul, he died with more despatch.
Neither did such a goodly Company
Attend his death, as now has honor'd me.
You seem to fancy, if you spared me now
You'd all be shamed; and haply, 't would be so."
"Hear him!" cried Bruin; "hear the Ruffian boast;
Quick! prithee, quick! let no more time be lost."

Then Reynard seriously to think began—
"Could I but now devise some cunning plan;
That, in this hour of my extremest need,
I might be pardoned and from bondage freed;
Escape with credit from death's bitter throes,
And heap disgrace on these detested Foes.
What can be done? 't is worth some pains to take,
Since nothing less than life is here at stake.
Slight seem the chances for me; strong, against;
The King, no doubt, is bitterly incens'd;
My Enemies all here; my Friends away;
All my misdeeds brought to the light of day:—
And, truth to speak, but little good I've done,
Yet ever hoped this evil hour to shun.
If they'd but grant me liberty of speech,
Some of their cruel hearts I yet might reach;
And so get free of this accursed rope;
At least I'll try it:—while there's life, there's hope."

Then turning on the ladder where he stood,
He thus addressed th' assembled Multitude:
"My doom is fixed; chance of escape is none;
Grant then a dying man one trifling boon:
Before you all, as many as are here,

Ere yet I close my criminal career,
 Fain would I freely all my sins confess,
 Lamenting that their number is not less;
 Else for some crime in secret done by me,
 The Innocent perchance might punished be:
 And thus my sinful soul some hope may have
 Of mercy on the other side the grave."

Many were moved at this and 'gan to say;
 "Small is the favor, brief is the delay."
 And as it seemed a reasonable thing,
 They begged it and obtained it of the King.
 A load was now removed from Reynard's heart,
 And he at once prepared to play his part:
 While through the Crowd expectant murmurs ran,
 With well-feigned penitence he thus began:

"Oh, aid me now *Spiritus Domini*!

For I am sentenced and must shortly die.
 Vast as this meeting, scarce can I see one,
 To whom I've not some grievous inj'ry done.
 Whilst I was still a tiny little Brat,
 Scarce weaned, and not much higher than my hat,
 I loved to watch the Lambs and Kids at play
 When from their watchful Herds they chanced to stray:
 It made my bosom throb to hear them bleat,
 My bowels yearn too for substantial meat.
 Ere long, in jest, I bit to death a Lamb,
 Who'd stroll'd away some distance from its Dam;
 While yet 'twas warm and fresh, I licked the blood,
 And found that it was exquisitely good.
 Four of the youngest Kids I next did slaughter:
 The thought—Heav'n help me!—makes my mouth yet
 water.

Grown bolder, I indulged each wild caprice;
 My tooth spared neither Fowls nor Ducks nor Geese;
 I caught and ate them wheresoever found,
 And some, half-eaten, buried in the ground.

"One winter, on the Rhine, it chanced I met
 Is'grim,—a meeting I may well regret.
 He claimed direct relationship with me,

Showed we were Cousins, and in what degree.
Guileless myself, I readily believed;
Perhaps too ready to be so deceived.
Ourselves we bound then in a solemn league;
Force should be used by him; by me, intrigue;
Eternal friendship each to each we swore,
Ah! little did I ween what fruit his friendship bore.

"The provinces we traversed, one and all;
He the large booty stealing; I, the small.
Our bargain was, we should divide all fair;
But what he chose to leave was all my share;
Nor was this all th' injustice I must bear.
If e'er he chanced a Goat or Sheep to steal,
And I came up, and found him at his meal;
Or caught him gorging a fresh-slaughtered Calf,
Of which he'd not devoured more than half;
He'd grin his teeth at me, and swear and curse;
I was e'en glad that matters were no worse.
And thus it was he always treated me,
However large the booty chanced to be.
In hunting, if we ever caught, by luck,
Some head of noble game, as Hind, or Buck,
Or Ox, or Cow, whose carcass vast was more
Than e'en his gluttony could all devour;
His Wife and Children straight made their appearance,
And in a trice there was a total clearance;
Not e'en a spare rib fell unto my share,
But what was gnawed and polished, clean and bare:
And thus was I forever forced to fare.
But Heav'n be thanked I never suffered hunger;
I'd means to live on, twenty years or longer;
A treasure vast of silver and of gold,
Securely hidden in a secret hold.
More than a single waggon, I might say
Even at seven loadings, could convey."

Noble, the King, heard all that Reynard said,
And bending forward now his Royal head;
"Say then, where did you get it from?" he cried,
"I mean the treasure." And the Fox replied,

"It boots me nought to keep my secret now;
I cannot take my wealth to where I go.
All, as Your Grace commands me, will I tell;
From fear or favor nought will I conceal.
Stol'n was the treasure; I'll not tell a lie:
Th' occasion though the theft shall justify.

"There was a plot, a most atrocious thing!
Even to murder You, my Lord and King;
And then to seize upon the vacant Throne:
Beyond all doubt the deed would have been done,
If but secure that treasure had been left;
Your life, my Liege, depended on that theft.
It helped indeed to lay my Father low,
Perchance involved his soul in endless woe:
But private interests, however dear,
With public duties must not interfere."

The Queen had heard this lengthy rigmarole
With most extreme bewilderment of soul,
Alternating between alarm and pleasure;
Her husband's murder, heaps of glitt'ring treasure,
And widow's weeds, and bridal garments white,
In wild confusion danced before her sight

"Reynard," she cried, "your hour is almost come;
Before you lies the road to your long home;
Nought but true penitence can save your soul;
Tell nothing but the truth, and tell the whole."

Then spake the King, "Be silent, ev'ry one!
Let Reynard from the gallows-tree come down;
And let him,—but still bound,—approach mine ear,
'T is fit that this strange hist'ry I should hear."

With cheerful hopes buoyed up the Fox descends,
While grieved his Foes were, and rejoiced his Friends;
Approached, as he was bid, the King and Queen;
Who longed to know what might this myst'ry mean.
His web of lies he straight prepared to spin;
'If the King's grace,' he thought, 'I could but win,
And, by some cunning trick of policy,
Could ruin those who seek to ruin me,
From peril then should I be wholly freed.

Ah! that would be a master stroke indeed.
'T is a bold cast: if I would prosper in 't,
'T will need the use of falsehood without stint.
The Queen impatient questioned him again:
"The whole proceeding, Reynard, now explain;
Speak truth, and ease your conscience and your soul."
"Truly," said Reynard, "will I tell the whole.
Am I not doomed, too justly doomed, to die?
No chance there is to 'scape my destiny.
My soul to burden more at such a time
Were but to add a folly to my crime.
Better to speak the truth at any rate,
Though Friends and Kinsmen I may implicate.
There is no help for it, I know right well;
Before mine eyes I have the pains of Hell."

And the King's heart with gloom was overspread;
"And speak'st thou nought but sober truth?" he said.
Reynard replied with sanctimonious mien,
"A miserable Sinner have I been;
And oft have lied to serve mine interest;
But surely now the truth shall aid me best:
Falsely to make a dying declaration
Would be to court eternal condemnation.
Yourself, my Liege, have doomed that I must die;
With my last words I dare not breathe a lie."

While thus did Reynard, vile Dissembler, speak,
Remorse and terror seemed to blanch his cheek.
And the Queen said, "His anguish moves my ruth:
Encourage him, dear Lord, to speak the truth;
And hear his story calmly to the end:
Our safety may upon his tale depend.
Give your commands that no one silence break,
And let him publicly his statement make."

At the King's bidding not a sound was heard;
And Reynard spake, "Please you, my gracious Lord,
Receive with favor what I have to say;
Though note nor minute have I here to-day,
The whole conspiracy will I lay bare,
'And no one, be he Friend or Foe, will spare."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE PARDON.

Now hear what lying tales the Fox dared state,
To screen himself, and others inculcate;
To what base falsehoods utterance he gave,
Slandered his very Father in the grave,
Traduced the Badger, too, his staunchest Friend;
He thought all means were sanctioned by the end;
So he could but get credit for his lies,
And have revenge upon his Enemies.

Thus he began: "It chanced that once my Sire,
Whose wit and wisdom still the World admire,
Discovered, hid in an obscure retreat,
The treasures of King Emmerick the Great;
It seemed a Godsend, but it brought such evil,
'T was much more likely sent him from the Devil.
With his new fortune he waxed haught and proud;
For his old Comrades deemed himself too good;
Fancied that by assistance of his pelf
To higher circles he might raise himself;
Conceived ideas the most absurd and vain,
And hatched the strangest maggots in his brain.
He sent off Tybalt to Ardennes' wild regions
For Bruin, tend'ring him his sworn allegiance;
Inviting him to Flanders to repair,
And promising to make him King when there.
Bruin with vast delight his letter read,
Without delay to Flanders off he sped;
Him did my Sire exultingly receive;
And planned how their designs they might achieve.

They got to join them in the enterprise,
Is'grim the savage, and Greybeard the wise.
These four in the conspiracy combin'd;
Four persons truly, though but one in mind;
While Tybalt joined their counsels for a fifth:
They journeyed onwards till they came to Ifth;
A little village is there of that name,
Obscure it is and all unknown to fame;
'Twixt this and Ghent, in a sequestered spot,
They met together to arrange their plot.
Over the meeting, which murk night did hide,
The Devil and my Father did preside;
One o'er their minds with false hopes kept his hold,
One, with the influence of his dirty gold.
Regardless of all loyalty and faith,
They compassed and imagined the King's death;
The five then swore on Is'grim's cursed head,
Bruin the Bear should reign in Noble's stead;
And at Aix-la-Chapelle, upon the throne,
Should bind his temples with the golden crown.
If any one their trait'rous scheme withstood,
Bound to the King by fealty or blood,
Him should my Sire with words or bribes persuade,
Or, failing these, call force in to his aid.
I learnt the bus'ness in the strangest way;
The Badger had been drinking hard one day,
Th' uxorious blockhead, though it risked his life,
Told the whole secret to his wheedling Wife;
He bound her though to solemn secrecy,
And the Fool fancied that he safe would be.
But what are woman's vows? His Wife and mine
Gossips had been together from lang syne;
And when they met, the former, as with child
Of her grand secret, nodded, smirked and smil'd;
And having made my Wife first swear an oath,
By the three Kings, and by her faith and troth,
Never to breathe one word to mortal soul,
Relieved her lab'ring bosom of the whole.
My Wife was horror-struck, and straightway she

Felt it her duty to tell all to me;
Of course: for Moralists have all one mind,
That inofficious vows can never bind.
I saw at once—what man of sense would not?—
The wickedness and folly of the plot:
All living Beasts had gone unto the Dogs,—
And fared, as formerly those stupid Frogs;
Who with their ceaseless croakings worried Heaven,
'To change the King who first to them was given;
His tranquil reign inglorious they deemed;
They long'd for greater freedom, as it seemed;
Then o'er them to preside Heav'n sent the Stork;
Like a Legitimate he set to work;
All who opposed he banished from the State,
Decreed their lands and chattels confiscate;
And while he thus enrich'd himself, he swore
'T was all to benefit the Church and Poor;
While love for law and order he professed,
Freedom in speech and action were repressed;
And none were heard, or suffered, to repine;
Thus did he prove he ruled by Right Divine.
The poor Fools curst their self-invited fate,
And wished the old King back; but 't was too late."
Thus spake the Fox, and lied at ev'ry word,
That all who heard him wondered as they heard.
"The State," he thus proceeded, "had been lost;
But 'twas Your Safety, Sire, concerned me most:
The risks I ran to save You were immense,
And merited some better recompense.
Bruin's fell mind I knew; his temper curst,
His love of cruelty forebode the worst;
Our lives, if he had chanced to get the sway,
Had not been worth the purchase of a day.
Our present King enjoys a diff'rent fame;
Noble alike by nature and by name.
A sad and stupid change indeed it were—
A royal Lion for a clownish Bear!
Thus with myself I oft communed in thought;
And means to ward this evil daily fought.

“One thing was certain; if my Sire retain’d
This vast amount of wealth at his command,
Hosts of Allies together he might bring,
Would win his game, while we should lose our King.
And now my chiefest study was to trace
This secret treasure to its hiding place;
Then bear it safe away, if so I might;
Of this I dreamed by day and schemed by night.
Wherever now the crafty Old-one went,
Through field or forest where his steps he bent,
Whether in cold, or heat, or wet, or dry,
Close on his track incessantly was I.

“But Chance at length, or rather, Heaven’s high will,
Procured me what I could not gain by skill.
Concealed behind a bush, one summer’s day,
Chewing the cud of bitter thought, I lay;
Grinding all sorts of plans within my pate,
This treasure to secure, and save the State:
When from a fissure in the rocks hard by,
I saw my Father creep out stealthily;
With expectation breathless I lay hid:
While, cautious, he looked round on ev’ry side;
Thought himself safe, perceiving no one near,
And then began his games, as you shall hear.
The hole with sand he filled, and all around
He levelled skilfully th’ adjacent ground;
Nor was this all; before he left the place,
All marks of footsteps he contrived t’ efface:
Bent to the earth, he swished his tail about,
And smoothed it o’er with his elastic snout.
Ah! truly was my Sire a wondrous Man!
The wide World now may watch him, if it can!
How many quips and cranks and wanton wiles
I learnt from him, most cunning of old Files!

“But to proceed. He quickly left the spot;
‘Here then the treasure is concealed,’ I thought.
I hastened to the rocks with eager soul,
Soon scratched away the sand and cleared the hole,
And down into the cleft with caution stole.

Good Heav'ns! what precious things there met my sight!
What masses of red gold and silver white!
The oldest present here, I'm bold to say,
Ne'er saw such stores as I beheld that day.
My Wife I brought the glorious sight to see;
To move the treasure hourly labored we;
And sooth, it was a work of toil and pain;
We'd nought to help us,—neither cart nor wain.
My good Wife held out bravely to the last,
Till we in safety had the treasure plac'd.

“Meanwhile my Sire consulted day by day,
With those who sought our Sov'reign to betray.
For dread and horror now your souls prepare,
Their machinations base whilst I lay bare.
By Isegrim and Bruin briefs were sent,
To raise recruits and stir up discontent;
All were allured in Bruin's host to serve;
Whom lucre might from duty tempt to swerve.
And that the call they sooner might obey,
They were assured a month's advance of pay.
These briefs my Father round the country bore.
He deemed in safety he had left his store;
Though if with all his friends he'd searched for ever,
He ne'er had found a solitary stiver.
No pains he spared to further the design;
Sought ev'ry spot between the Elbe and the Rhine,
And many Converts to the cause he made;—
Who largely promises may soon persuade.

“At length the summertide once more was come;
With it returned my weary Father home;
Of troubles and mishaps he'd much to tell,
Of many hair-breadth 'scapes by field and fell;
How for his life he had been forced to flee,
Among the towered heights of Saxony;
Where wicked hunters chased him out of spite,
With horse and hound, from morn till starry night;
That scarce he saved his skin by rapid flight.
With joy then to his comrades he display'd
The long list of Adherents he had made.

Bruin was charmed, and, with the other four,
Studied th' important writing o'er and o'er.
Twelve hundred souls of Is'grim's savage Clan,
Had pledged themselves to join him to a man,
With sharp and hungry teeth and open jaws,
They promised to support King Bruin's cause.
The Cats and Bears enrolled without a bribe;
And all the Glutton, all the Badger tribe;
But, less devoted, or more cautious, they
Had bargained for the month's advance of pay.
All these and many more had sworn t' attend,
At the first summons which the Bear should send.
By me this plot was foiled: but thanks be given
Not unto me for this; but unto Heaven!

"My Sire now hastened to the cave once more;
Eager to tell his cherished treasure o'er:
But, though the firmest faith possessed his mind,
The more he sought the more he did not find.
Vain were his labors, his regrets as vain,
Doomed never to behold his wealth again.
Three days disconsolate he roamed the wood,
Shunning his mates, and never tasting food;
The fourth—sad day for me! although his Heir—
He hanged himself from grief and sheer despair.

"Thus have I done, thus suffered, good my Lord,
To countervail a plot my soul abhorr'd.
Though for my pains this strange return I get.
The steps I took I never can regret,
Is'grim and Bruin sit at Your right hand,
Doomed as a Traitor the poor Fox must stand;
But yet this thought shall consolation bring;
I lost my Father, but I saved my King.
The ill I've done be buried in my grave,
My name this one good deed from infamy shall save."

He ceased: a murmur ran through all the crowd;
But what all thought, none dared to speak aloud.
The King and Queen both felt a strong desire
This wondrous store of treasure to acquire;
They call'd the Fox aside and bade him say

In what place he had stowed it all away.

Though Reynard found it hard his joy to hide,
Still in desponding accents he replied;

"Why should I tell this secret to my Lord,
Who dooms my death and ever doubts my word?
In Traitors he prefers his trust to place,
Whose triumph is achieved in my disgrace."

"Nay," said the Queen, impatient; "nay, not so!
His vengeance just my Lord may yet forego,
The past he may forgive, may e'en forget;
And you may live a life of credit yet;
Could he but have some certain pledge, that you
Would for the future loyal prove and true."

"Ah gracious Queen!" the wily Fox replies,
"Let me find favor in King Noble's eyes;
Through your mild influence let me pardoned be,
And hence depart in life and member free;
Amplly will I atone for all my crimes;
Nor King nor Kaiser lives of modern times
Can truly boast one half the wealth to own,
Which I will lay before my Sov'reign's throne."

"Believe him not!" the angry Monarch cries;
"Whose lips ne'er open but to utter lies.
If he would teach you how to cheat or thief,
His words you then might readily believe."

And the Queen said—"Let not my Lord be wroth:
Though Reynard's life ill augurs for his truth;
Yet surely this time hath he spoken sooth.
His Father and his Uncle hath he not
Shown to have shared in that accursed plot?
He might have sure devised some stratagem,
While blaming others, to exon'rate them.
And if he do speak truth, how great a prize
We lose, if now with him his secret dies."

Awhile the Monarch paused, immersed in thought,
In his soul's depths as though he counsel sought.
Then answered—"If you think 'twere better so,
Nor deem that ill from such a course may flow,
I may pursue the bent of my own mind,

To mercy more than vengeance still inclin'd.
The Culpit I will pardon, and restore,
As a new man, to all he held before.
This time I trust him—let him though take heed—
This time I trust him, for the last indeed;
For by my Father's crown I make a vow,
If with false tidings he deceive me now,
On all who claim his kin, where'er they be,
My wrath shall fall, e'en to the tenth degree,
In torture shall they perish utterly."

Seeing the King so easily was sway'd,
Reynard took heart and spoke out undismay'd:
"To lie now were most criminal, no doubt;
When I should be so speedily found out."

Thus the sly Knave the Royal pardon won,
Both for his Father's treason and his own.
Freed from the gallows and his Enemies,
Great was his joy nor less was their surprise.

"Noblest of Kings!" he cried, "and best of Lords!
My gratitude is all too vast for words.
But the warm thanks of this poor heart are given
To you, and your august Spouse, next to Heaven.
My life You spare; my wealth is but Your due;
For life and wealth alike belong to You.
The favors heaped on my unworthy self
Far, far outweigh all thoughts of paltry pelf.
To You as a free gift I now make o'er
The whole of good King Emmerick's mighty store.
Then listen, Sire, while I its hiding place
By certain signs enable you to trace.

"Now mark me! Far in Flanders, to the east,
There lies a wild inhospitable waste;
There grows a single copse named Husterlow,
Near it the waters of a fountain flow,
Called Krekelburn; these names remember well;
Why they're so called is more than I can tell.
It is a savage and romantic scene,
Where foot of Beast hath ne'er or rarely been;
There dwell alone the Owl, the Bat, the Jay;

And there it was I stow'd my wealth away.
Remember, Sire, close each to each they lie,
The copse, and the spring Krekelburn hard by.
Yourself and Royal Spouse had best go there,
It were not safe to send a Messenger:
'T were far too great a risk to trust a Stranger;
And with the truest Friend not much less danger.
Now further mark my words: at Krekelburn
Sharp to the left you take a sudden turn;
A stone's throw off two birches shall you see,
Their pensile branches drooping gracefully.
Directly up to these then must you go;
There delve forthwith; the treasure lies below.
At first but moss you'll find about the roots,
But soon your toil will meet with richer fruits;
Heaps of red gold you'll find; in ingots part,—
Part fabricated by the Goldsmith's art;
Among it will be seen King Emmerick's crown,
Which silly Bruin hoped to call his own;
And many a costly chain and jewel rare,
Far more than I can reckon up, are there.
Then, gracious Sire! when all this wealth You see,
Will You not think with kindness on poor Me?
'That honest Fox!' methinks I hear You say,
'With so much skill to store his wealth away!
'My blessing be upon him day and night!'
Thus Reynard spake, the wily Hypocrite.

And the King answered: "You must with me go,
Or ne'er shall I find out this Husterlow?
Of Lubeck and Cologne I've oft heard tell,
Of Paris also and Aix-la-Chapelle;
But never yet of Husterlow before,
Or Krekelburn, until this very hour.
How may I know that this is not again
A pure invention of your subtle brain?"
Rejoined the Fox, with brazen face,
"My Lord I send thee not to trace
The weary way to foreign strand,
The place lies here in Flemish land,

It is enough to drive one to despair,
To find one's word so doubted every where!
Haply there may be some one here in Court
Who may avouch the truth of my report."

He looked around and call'd the Hare,—who came—
A timid terror trembling through his frame.

"Come hither, Master Puss!" the Fox began;
"Hold up your head, and look, Sir, like a man!
The King desires to learn if aught you know
Of either Krekelburn or Husterlow;
Speak truly now, on your allegiance oath."

And the Hare answered—"Sire! I know them both.
Far off in Flanders in the waste they lie,
Husterlow first, and Krekelburn close by:
Husterlow is the name they give a copse,
Where crookback Simon had his working shops;
He coined false money; that was years ago.
It is a dreary spot, as well I know;
From cold and hunger there I've suffered much,
When flying from the cruel Beagles' clutch."
"Enough," cried Reynard, "thou canst go,
The King has heard what he would know."

Then Noble spoke once more;
"Reynard, forget my hasty speech,
But now at once set out and teach
The way to this thy store."
Quoth Reynard "Gladly would I go
With thee, at once the path to show;
But ah! a deadly sin 't would be,
To take me in this company,
The cause with shame I tell!

"How Isegrim turned Monk, Sire, you have heard;
'Twas more to serve his belly, than the Lord.
Soon were his Brethren weary of his tricks;
Almost starved out; he ate enough for six;
For flesh on fast days would he rave and howl.
And caring nothing for his wretched soul,
At last, one afternoon, about Mid-Lent,
He sent for me, and straight to him I went: .

And I must needs confess that I was stagger'd
To see him look so sadly gaunt and haggard.
He thus entreated me, with tearful eyes,
By all our loves, by all our kindred ties;
'Get me some food, or I shall die of famine!
'Sweet Coz, you see the wretched plight I am in.'
My heart was softened; for he is my kin;
And in my weakness I committed sin:
To the next town I hied and stole some meat;
Placed it before the Wolf, and he did eat.
But for my goodness ill was I repaid,
By this vile Judas treach'rously betray'd.
And I, for this offense, more heinous than
All my past crimes, lie 'neath the Church's ban.
But now I have escaped my threatened doom,
I thought, with Your kind leave, to wend to Rome;
By penitence and alms I there might hope
To purchase absolution of the Pope;
Thence, having kissed his Holiness's toe,
I purposed to Jerusalem to go;
With cockle hat and staff and sandal shoon,
Why should a Fox not take a Palmer's tone?
Returned, from all sins purged, I might with pride
Then take my place, Sire, at Your honored side.
But if perchance I ventured this to-day,
Would not the pious Scandal-mongers say;
'Lo! how the King seeks Reynard's company,
'Whom he so lately had condemned to die;
'And he still excommunicated too!
But judge You, Sire, what may be best to do."
"Heav'ns!" cried the King, "how should I know all
this?
It were a sin to keep you here, I wis;
The Hare, or some one else, can show the way:
You have Our leave to go without delay.
For worlds I'd not your pilgrimage prevent;
Since I believe you truly penitent.
May Heaven, which alone your heart can read,
Prosper your purpose and your journey speed!"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THE RELAPSE.

THUS Reynard gained once more his Sov'reign's grace :
Who slowly mounting up to his high place,
Prepared t' address the meeting from his throne;
Bade them be silent all, and all sit down,
After their rank, ranged on the verdant sward;
On either hand drew up the Royal Guard;
At the Queen's side th' undaunted Reynard stood;
And thus the Monarch spake in thoughtful mood:

“Be still and listen, all ye Beasts and Birds,
Both small and great, hear and attend Our words!
Here, in Our mercy, see where Reynard stands,
Late doomed to suffer by the Hangman's hands.
But now for certain reasons, grave and high,
Touching Ourselves, Our crown and dignity,
And, at the intercession of Our Queen,
Restored to grace and favor hath he been;
And free We here pronounce him, from this date,
In life and limb, in person and estate.
In Our protection him and his We take,
Desiring they be honored, for our sake:
And furthermore, it is Our Royal will,
Henceforth of him none dare to utter ill;
Convinced, as We his former faults forgive,
In future he a better life will live.
To-morrow will he leave his hearth and home,
And start upon a pilgrimage for Rome;
Thence will he make, as he doth now aver,
A journey to the Holy Sepulchre;
And then return, his sins confessed and shrive.

Completely reconciled to Us and Heaven."

He ceased. The Cat, in anger and despair,
Sought out his dear Allies, the Wolf and Bear:
"Our labor's lost;" he cried, "ah! well-a-day,
The very Devil is there here to pay!
From this curst place would I were safe away!
If Reynard once get power, be sure that he
His fierce revenge will wreak on all us three.
Of my right eye already am I reft;
Alas! the other will not long be left."

"Woe's me! what shall we do?" exclaimed the Bear.
"Let us," said Is'grim, "to the Throne repair!
Sure 't is the strangest thing that e'er was seen!"
Forthwith they knelt before the King and Queen:
For justice loud they spoke, or rather stammered;
For justice, inarticulately clamored.

But angrily the King broke forth:—"My Lords!
Either you did not hear, or mark my words.
It is my pleasure Reynard to forgive;
It is a branch of my prerogative;
For is it not to every Schoolboy known,
Mercy's the brightest jewel of the Crown?"

His mighty wrath had now to fury risen;
He bade them both be seized and cast in prison;
Deeming they still might plot, if left at large,
The treasons, laid by Reynard to their charge.

The Fox was now well paid for all his pains;
Himself in favor, and his Foes in chains:
Nay more—he from the King contrived to win
The grant of a square-foot of Bruin's skin;
He vowed—and never could enough extol it—
It was the very thing to make a wallet.

Thus was he for his pilgrim-journey suited;
But liking not to make it quite bare-footed,
He sued the Queen; "May 't please your Majesty,
Your own devoted Pilgrim now am I;
The road I have to go is rough and long,
And I in health am anything but strong;
It greatly would protect my tender toes,

Saving your presence, if I had some shoes.
Now Isegrim the Wolf hath got two pair;
Stout-built and strong; and one he may well spare;
It cannot incommode him **much** to lose them,
Since he has no occasion **now** to use them.
Speak for me, gracious Madam, to the King,
He will not sure deny so small a thing.
Dame Gieremund, too, cannot be averse
To let me have the loan of two of hers;
As she'll not see her Lord some time to come,
Like a good Housewife, she will stay at home."

The Queen replied, she thought it was but fair
That each of them should let him have a pair:
And Reynard thanked her with his best of bows,
Saying; "I promise, if I get the shoes,
Your Majesty shall have my daily pray'rs,
That Heaven preserve you free from fretting cares;
Besides, what holy relicts back I bring,
You shall be sure to share them with the King."

He had his wish: from Isegrim's fore paws
Two shoes they stripped him off, both skin and claws;
And Gieremund, his next to widowed Dame,
As to her hinder feet, they served the same.

Now while the Wolf and Bear together lie
In prison and in pain, and wish to die;
With shoes and wallet fitted out, the Fox
Draws near to Gieremund, whom thus he mocks;
"Look, best and dearest one, these shoes, you see,
Fit just as though they had been made for me!
Though you have wished me ill in days by-gone,
Such well-timed kindness can for all atone.
Who would have thought, a few short hours ago,
To see me honored and accoutred so?
But Fortune's wheel is ever on the move;
And what is now depressed soon mounts above.
Act on this maxim, and you baffle Fate;
Hope, when in trouble; fear, when fortunate.
Whene'er to Rome I get, or cross the sea,
My heart untravelled with my Friends will be;

And you the largest portion shall obtain
Of those indulgences I hope to gain."

Poor Gieremund meanwhile in torture lay,
And scarce could master strength enough to say;
"This hour is thine, and we must needs submit;
But there may come a day of reck'ning yet."

Thus Isegrim and Bruin both remained
Wounded, disgraced, imprisoned and enchained;
And Reynard's triumph seemed complete to be,—
Although he grieved that Tybalt still was free.

When morning came, the Hypocrite arose,
And first he greased, and then he donned his shoes;
Next to the Royal levée hastening,

To make his congé, thus addressed the King;

"Your Servant, Sire, your notice would engage
Ere he sets out on his long pilgrimage.

Sad is my lot: the Church's ban hangs o'er me,

A dreary, dang'rous journey lies before me:

'T would give me hope, and confidence of heart

To have your Chaplain's blessing ere I start;

Success would then my onward steps attend,

And bring my travels to a happy end."

Now Noble's private Chaplain was the Ram;

A gentle Brute, and Bellyn was his name;

The King, who of his services was chary,

Employed him also as his Secretary.

Him now he bade come forth, and thus address'd;

"Speak over Reynard,—'t is his own request,—

Some holy words, his deep remorse t' assuage,

And cheer him on his lonely pilgrimage;

He goes, you know, to Rome; then o'er the sea;

And by your blessing sanctified would be;

Then, having hung his wallet by his side,

Give him a Palmer's staff his steps to guide."

And Bellyn answered thus; "My gracious Lord,

What Reynard has avowed you surely heard;

He owns he still is excommunicate;

And truly I lament his wretched state;

But should I do the thing you now require,

I might incur my worthy Bishop's ire;
The matter easily might reach his ear;
And he could punish me, and would, I fear.
To Reynard, certes, I wish nothing ill;
And gladly would perform my Sov'reign's will;
For this, all things in reason would I venture,
Could I be sure to 'scape my Bishop's censure:
But the good Prelate is an awful Man,
And such a strict Disciplinarian;
Besides, there are th' Archdeacon and the Dean"—
The King no longer could contain his spleen,—
"What," he exclaimed, "boots all this idle prate?
I asked for deeds, not words, Sir Woolypate."
And then he swore, and loudly, at the Ram,
Saying, "Are you aware, Sir, who I am?
Nor Priest nor Pope shall in my realm have sway;
I look My Subjects shall their King obey.
And whether you wish Reynard well or ill
Can have no influence on My Royal will.
It is my pleasure he should go to Rome;
May be 'tis yours he should remain at home."

Astounded by the Monarch's stern reproof
The poor Ram trembled to his very hoof;
And straight he took his book and 'gan to read
A blessing over Reynard's sinful head;
But little did that Wretch attend to it,
Or little care about the benefit.

The blessing o'er, they bring his scrip and staff;
How in his sleeve doth the false Pilgrim laugh;
While down his cheeks dissembling tear-drops course,
As though his heart were melting with remorse.
And in good sooth he did feel some regret,
That Tybalt was not in his power yet:
He wished to cage him with the other Three,
Whom he had brought to such extremity.
He begged them all, and chiefly Isegrim,
That they would pardon and would pray for him;
Then, with some fear still ling'ring at his heart,
Lest he might be detained, prepared to start.

And Noble, King of Beasts, much edified
To see such symptoms of repentance, cried;
"Say, my good Reynard, prithee, why such haste?
Some few hours with your Friends you sure may waste."

"Nay, my kind Lord," said that false-hearted Loon,
"A good work ne'er can be commenced too soon.
Dismiss me, Sire; th' important hour is come,
Big with the fate that Reynard leads to Rome."

The Monarch, taken in by Reynard's art,
Gave him his gracious license to depart;
And bade th' assembled Barons of his Court
The Pilgrim a short distance to escort.
The Wolf and Bear 'scaped this humiliation;
And from their fetters forged some consolation.

To the King's favor quite restored again,
Reynard sets forth with all that lordly train,
Upon his pious journey to be shriven,—
Much the same road that Lawyers go to Heaven;—
Pleased to have brought the King to such a pass,
Led by the nose as easy as an Ass.
Honored was he and waited on by those
Who even now had been his bitter Foes.
Nor could he yet let his old tricks alone;
But turning back he knelt before the Throne,
Kissed the King's hand, and cried;—"Ah, dearest Lord!
Vouchsafe to let me speak one parting word:
Remember what great int'rests are at stake,
And of those Traitors an example make:
Some acts of mercy Reason will condemn;
Your People suffer, if You pardon them."

And then with downcast look away he went,
And all the bearing of a Penitent.

The King broke up his Court without delay;
Then to his royal palace took his way:
And those who, to their shame, and Reynard's pride,
His progress had some way accompanied,
Now took their leave and hastened to depart.
Meanwhile the Rogue so well had plied his art,
Insisting on the blessings of repentance,

He'd softened not a few of his Attendants;
And specially the tender-hearted Hare
From sympathetic tears could not forbear.
Him now the cunning Fox accosted thus;
"And must we part indeed, dear Cousin Puss?
If you and Bellyn could persuaded be
A little further yet to go with me,
'T would be an act of kindness on your part,
And comfort much my poor afflicted heart.
How greatly to my credit 'twill redound
If I in such society am found;
Pleasant Companions are ye both, I ken,
And, what's far better, honest gentlemen;
Ne'er doing wrong, you others' wrongs forgive,
And, as I lately did, you always live,
Of grass and herbs and leaves you make your food,
And never soil your guiltless teeth with blood;
Hence are your consciences serene and quiet;—
Such good results from vegetable diet."
And thus into the snare he laid they fell:
A little flattery sometimes does well.
To Malepartus, journeying on, they came;
When thus the wily Fox addressed the silly Ram;
"Dear Bellyn, will you tarry here a little?
You must, by this time, surely want some victual;
And hereabouts you'll find enough to eat;
The herbage is particularly sweet,
In fact we rather of our pastures vaunt;
I'll just take Pussy in to see his Aunt;—
Poor Soul! she sits alone disconsolate,
And mourning over my unhappy fate;
And when she hears that I to Rome must go,
'Twill cause her quite an ecstasy of woe.
Pussy, I know, for his dear Uncle's sake,
Will to his Aunt the sad news gently break."

And thus, to carry out his own vile ends,
The Fox contrived to separate the Friends.
Puss entered with him; when—omen of ill!
His footsteps stumbled on the very sill;

But Reynard smiled, and they passed onward, where
His vixen Wife and cubby Children were.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to see her Lord
In safety to her longing arms restored!
She'd suffered much anxiety and pain,
Lest by his wrathful Foes he should be slain,
Or a close pris'ner for his life remain,
And seeing him decked out with scrip and staff,
She scarce knew whether first to cry or laugh,
So great her joy and wonder: thus she spoke;
"Reynie, my Love; my heart had almost broke;
How glad I am you're come! Where *have* you been?
And what *does* all this masquerading mean?"

And thus the Fox replied—"Ah, dearest Wife!
But narrowly have I escaped with life:
My Foes were powerful, and I was weak;
I had the halter round my very neck;
But our good King, with that peculiar sense
That marks all Sov'reigns, saw my innocence;
And, as a testimonial to my worth,
In pious Palmer's weeds has sent me forth;
My character without the slightest stain;
The Wolf and the Bear as hostages remain;
And Master Puss, you see, has by the King
Been giv'n to me as a peace-offering:
For the King said,—'Reynard, you see that Hare.
'Yon trembling Coward, who stands crouching there;
'That is the wretch by whom you've been betray'd,'
And for his treason he shall now be paid."

Puss heard these threat'ning words with mortal fear;
They seemed to ring a death-knell in his ear;
Confused and scared he strove in haste to fly,
But Reynard darted on him viciously,
And clutched him by the throat; Puss shrieked amain,
"Help, Bellyn, help!" he cried, and cried again,
"Help! or by this false Pilgrim I am slain."

But long he did not cry: for Reynard's teeth
Soon cut his windpipe, and let out his breath.
Thus did this cursed and incarnate Fiend

Betray and murder his too-trusting Friend.

"Come now," he said, "to supper let us haste;
Our Friend is fat and delicate to taste;
The Simpleton was ne'er of use before;
To make him so long time ago I swore.
He wished to wound, but was afraid to strike;
So perish every one who does the like!"

Then the whole family sat down to sup;
The Hare was skinned and shared and eaten up:
The Vixen greatly the repast enjoyed,
And oft exclaimed, as with the bones she toyed;
"Heaven bless the King and Queen! how good they are,
To cater for us such delicious fare."

"For this time," said the Fox, "it may suffice;
I hope ere long a nobler sacrifice;
That I may let the whole world plainly see,
None injured Reynard with impunity."

Quoth Ermelyne—"Dear Lord, I prithee tell,
How you got away so safe and well."

"T would take," said he, "full many a weary hour
To show how I escaped the Law's grim pow'r;
T' explain the tricks, I played my Enemies,
And how I dammed—with dust—King Noble's eyes.
In sooth the bonds that now our hearts unite,
Though we are sworn as Lieges, are but slight;
And when the truth shall break upon his mind,
Within no bounds his rage will be confin'd.

Me if again within his power he hold
No wealth can save of silver or of gold;
No chance of mercy left, my fate will be
To hang like fruit, upon the gallows tree.

"Let us, dear Love, at once to Swabia fly;
Unknown by all, perdue we there may lie;
A safe asylum we are sure to find,
And heaps of provender of every kind;
Fowls, geese, hares, rabbits; butter, cheese, and cream;
Birds in the air and fishes in the stream.
There far from faithless Friends and furious Foes
Our life will ebb in leisure and repose;

In charity with all we'll pass our days,
And bring our Children up in Virtue's ways.

"For, dearest Chuck, to speak without disguise,
I've told a most infernal pack of lies:
A tale I forged about King Emmerick's store;
And that 't was hid at Krekelburn I swore.
If they go thither, as they will no doubt,
They soon must find the whole deception out;
And when 't is all discovered, you may form
Some faint idea of how the King will storm,
How he will swear; what vengeance he will vow;
And sure I feel that what he swears, he'll do.
You may suppose what fibs I told, dear Wife;
Ne'er was I so put to it in my life;
Again to lie were not the slightest use,
And therefore would admit of no excuse.

"But happen now what may, one thing is plain;
Nothing shall tempt me back to Court again:
Not for the wide world's wealth, from north to south,
I'd thrust my head into the Lion's mouth."

Him answered thus the sorrowing Ermelyne;
"And why should we be Outcasts, Husband mine?
Why should we leave our comfortable home,
Abroad, like Rogues and Vagabonds, to roam?
Here known by all, by all respected, too,
Your friends are faithful and your Vassals true;
And certainties against uncertainties
To change, is neither provident nor wise.
Against our will we cannot hence be torn;
Our stronghold here might laugh a siege to scorn.
Let the King hither come with all his Host:
He'll have his journey for his pains at most.
Of our escape I entertain no doubt;
So many ways we have of getting out.
The King is strong and we are weak; but yet
We to his pow'r can well oppose our wit.
For this I have no fears: but for your vow
To undertake a pilgrimage just now,
That chills my heart with icy fears I own:

What can I do, left friendless and alone?"

To her thus Reynard; "Sweet, you have prevailed;
'T was but a moment that my courage failed;
His threats are idle, and my fears are vain;
Shadows avaunt! Reynard's himself again!
As for my vow—better to be forsworn,
Than live the wretched finger-mark of scorn:
Vows, when compulsory, bind not the least;
I've heard that doctrine taught by many a Priest:
For my part, it may to the devil go;—
I speak not of the doctrine, but my vow.

"So be it as you wish. I stay at home;
For what on earth have I to do at Rome?
And for my promised journey to Jerusalem,
I only named the project to bamboozle 'em;
Nor if, instead of the one oath I swore,
I'd sworn a dozen, would I go the more.
With you and my dear Children will I stay,
And get out of my scrape as best I may.
And though the King should have me in his clutch,
Perchance it may not help him over-much;
I may succeed, as I have done ere now,
To fit a Fool's cap on his Royal brow:
At least I'll try: the vow I freely make,
I dare be sworn, I think, I shall not break."

Bellyn meanwhile had all impatient grown;
Had ate his fill, and wanted to be gone;
"Puss! are you ready? It is getting late."

Thus he calls out at Malepartus' gate;
And softly at the first, then louder knocks:
When to the door proceeds the wily Fox,
And says—"You must excuse our cousin Puss;
You can return; he'll pass the night with us."

"Methought," replied the Ram, "I heard him cry,
'Help! Bellyn, help! oh, help me or I die!'
I trust no ill could here my Coz befall."

"I thought," said Reynard, "You'd have heard him
call;
For in good sooth he made a mighty din;

I'll tell you how it happened—just step in."

But Bellyn's heart was not quite free from fear;
So he said, "Thank ye; I am better here."

Then wily Reynard answered; "Very well!
You shall hear how the accident befell.

I had just told my wife about my vow—

My promised pilgrimage to Rome, you know—

When she, alas! good soul, was so cast down,

That with the shock she fell into a swoon.

Our simple Friend, alarmed, began to cry,

'Help! Bellyn, help!—help, or my Aunt will die.'"

"Certes," said Bellyn, "he did loudly call."

"He did," quoth Reynard. "Now I've told you all.

As for my inj'ring him;" the False One said;

"I could not hurt a hair of that dear head.

I would be torn to pieces, limb by limb,

Sooner than even think of harming him.

"And now," quoth he, "to bus'ness. Yesterday,

The King desired me, as I came away,

That I, by letter, should communicate,

My thoughts on certain grave affairs of State.

This letter, with some other papers too,

I beg you'll carry back to Court with you.

I've giv'n the King some excellent advice,

Which, though I say it, is beyond all price.

While Puss was resting from his weary jaunt,

And talking old times over with his Aunt,

I just contrived a spare half hour to snatch,

And have drawn up a masterly despatch."

"I would with pleasure all your letters take;"

Said Bellyn, "but I fear the seals might break;

And I a serious censure should expect,

Having no pouch the papers to protect."

"That's true, dear Nephew;" answered Reynard, pat,

But we can very soon get over that:

The wallet that they made of Bruin's skin,

Will be the very thing to put them in;

'T is strong and thick, and will the wet repel;

I've one within will suit me just as well;

And doubt not that your labor will be vain;
Some favor from the King, you'll sure obtain."

The silly Ram believed all Reynard said;
Then back into his house the Sly One sped,
And in his wallet crammed the poor Hare's head;
Next having thought how he might best prevent
The Ram from finding out what 't was he sent;
Unto the door returning, thus he spake;
"Here, Nephew, hang this wallet round your neck.
In its contents I trust you will not pry;
'T would prove a fatal curiosity.

The knots in a peculiar way are done,
Which only to the King and me are known;
A mode that I invariably use,
Whenever I transmit important news;
If the King sees the fastenings all right,
The Messenger finds favor in his sight.

"Nay if a greater merit you desire;
And to preferment in the church aspire;
You have my fullest leave to tell the King,
The letters were of your imagining;
That though the handy-work by me was done,
The whole idea was yours, and yours alone;
So shall your mental powers be highly rated,
And you, no doubt, be duly elevated.
You'll rise to any station that you wish, up;
Be made a prebend or—who knows?—a bishop."

Who then so happy as that silly Ram?
He frisked and gamboled like a very lamb;
And joyfully he cried; "Now do I see
The love, dear Uncle, that you bear to me.
What credit will not this adventure bring!
How shall I be respected by the King!
That I such clever letters should indite—
I, who was ne'er considered over bright!
And all this pleasure and this honor too,
I've none to thank for, Uncle dear, but you.
No longer will I tarry. Let me see:—
You're sure that Puss will not go back with me?"

“Nay,” answered Reynard, “that’s impossible:
For, truth to speak, he’s just now far from well;
A cold he’s got has settled in his head;
He’s had his gruel and is gone to bed:
His Aunt it is, this treatment doth advise;
She’s greatly skilled in all such remedies.
He’ll follow speedily; nay, I would swear
He’ll be at Court as soon as you are there.”

“Farewell, then!” said the Ram, “no time I’ll waste,
Farewell!” And off he started in great haste:
Travelled all night, the roads not being heavy,
And just arrived in time for the King’s levée.

When the King saw him with the wallet on,
He motioned him he should approach the Throne,
Then said, while he held out his hand to kiss,
“Bellyn, you’re welcome back; but what means this?
Is that not Reynard’s wallet that you bear?
Methinks that I should know it any where.
I trust you left him safe and well in health;
I would not have him harmed for thrice his wealth.”

And Bellyn said; “Despatches, Sire, I bring
From Reynard greeting to my Lord the King;
To get them all complete we both combin’d;
And what he executed, I design’d.
For though the handy-work by him was done,
The whole idea was mine, and mine alone.
He tied the knots in a peculiar way,
Which you would understand, he bade me say.”

The King, perplexed, straight for the Beaver sent,
He was a man for learning eminent;
Could read off-hand, and seldom stopped to spell;
Knew foreign tongues—and his own pretty well;
He acted for the King as Notary;
To read despatches oft employed was he;
Vast was his science; Castor was his name;
And at the Royal bidding now he came.
And Tybalt was commanded to assist,
The fastenings of the wallet to untwist.

The strings untied, the pouch was op’d; when lo!

A sight of dread and agonizing woe!
Forth Castor drew the poor Hare's mangled head;
"This call you a despatch, forsooth?" he said;
"I own it fairly puzzles my poor brains;
Heav'n only knows, for I don't, what it means."

Both King and Queen were startled and distress'd;
And Noble's head sunk down upon his breast;
The only words he said distinctly were—
"Oh! Reynard! Reynard! would I had you here!"
Then long a stern and solemn silence kept;
Till, by degrees, along the circle crept
Th' astounding tidings that the King had wept.

At length his grief found utterance, and he spoke,
While his strong frame like to a Woman's shook:—

"He has deceived me;—Me! his King and Lord!
How could I trust the perjured Traitor's word?
Oh! day of shame! where shall I hide my head?
Disgraced! dishonored! would that I were dead!"

He seemed quite frantic; and the Courtly Crew
Felt it their duty to seem frantic too.

But Leopardus, near the throne who stood,—
A Prince he was, and of the Royal blood—
Thus spake; "My gracious Liege, I cannot see
Why You and our good Queen thus grieved should be.
Banish such gloomy feelings, and take heart;
Despair was never yet a Monarch's part.
As You, Sire, who so prudent? who so strong?
Remember too, a King can do no wrong."

"Alas!" cried Noble, "it is even so;
And this it adds sharpness to my woe.
'Tis not alone that I have been deceiv'd;
For that, I might have well in private griev'd;
But that the Wretch, to gain his wicked ends,
Has caused me do injustice to my Friends;—
Bruin and Is'grim, who in prison lie,
The Victims of his cursed villainy.
Is't not enough my soul to overwhelm,
That the two noblest Barons of my realm
Should be so punished, and for no offence,

But my blind trust in Reynard's evidence?
Alas! 'twas in an evil hour, I ween,
I heeded the persuasions of the Queen;
She, in simplicity a very child,
By his false tongue was easily beguil'd,
And for his pardon did so warmly pray—
I should have been more firm—but I gave way.
Idle is all regret; advice too late;
For even Kings must sometimes bow to Fate."

The Leopard answered, "Sire, though you know best,
Haply I may a useful hint suggest.
Some comfort to the Wolf and Bear 't would bring
To have the Ram as a peace-offering:
You heard him boldly, as a boast, declare,
'T was he that counselled killing the poor Hare.
Thus shall you deal him forth a righteous fate,
And thus the injured Peers propitiate.
Then we will hunt the Fox through all the land,
And kill him,—if we catch him,—out of hand;
For if he get but liberty of speech,
The very Devil will he over-reach.
In fine, until that crafty Brute is slain,
No respite from our griefs shall we obtain."

He ceased; and Noble, King of Beasts, replies;
"Your counsel pleases me, as just and wise.
Hasten and set th' imprisoned Barons free;
In honor shall they take their state near me.
Be all the Council summoned: they shall learn
How foully that base Traitor is forsworn;
How he and Bellyn killed the gentle Hare;
How he traduced the loyal Wolf and Bear:
And, as you counsel, Bellyn and his Heirs
For ever I make o'er to them and theirs."

Then Leopardus went without delay
To where the Wolf and Bear in prison lay.
Straight from their bonds by his commands released,
In soothing words the Twain he thus addressed:
"Hail, Noble Lords! good tidings, lo, I bring!
Full pardon and free conduct from the King!

By law, you both have been condemned of treason;
And law is the perfection of all reason;
But since 'tis proved you're free of all offence,
You're freely pardoned, for your innocence;
And likewise in some measure to atone
For all the suff'rings you have undergone,
Bellyn and all his Tribe, the King declares,
Are given up to you and to your Heirs:
In grove or green whene'er you chance to meet them,
You have full privilege to kill and eat them.
Further, the King will lend his royal aid
To punish him by whom you've been betray'd;
The Fox and all his Kindred, to a man,
You've leave to take and torture, if you can.
These rights, which unto you the King doth yield,
Will all by his Successors be upheld;
And, in return, you from your souls will cast
All painful recollections of the past;
Raised to your old estate, afresh will swear
Royal allegiance to the King to bear."

They took the pardon at the proffered price,
Bellyn the Simple fell a sacrifice:
And all his Kindred suffered too with him,
Victims to the fierce Clan of Isegrim.
Eternal war was entered on that day;
The Wolves thenceforward made all Sheep their prey;
Hunting and worrying them by day and night;
They had the power, and therefore had the right.

The Monarch further solace yet imparts
To Isegrim's and Bruin's wounded hearts,
By ordering a twelve-days' festival,
At which his Barons should be present all;
That so his Lieges might distinctly see
Those the King loved, should duly honored be.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

THE OUTLAWRY.

THE Court was for the festival prepared;
And all who came, the banquet freely shared;
By day and night succeeded endless feasts;
Was never such a gathering of Beasts;
All to do homage to the Wolf and Bear,
Who in their present joy forgot past care.

Nor did the Guests do nought but feed like Brutes;
The scene was varied with refined pursuits;
The charms of music lent their soothing aid.
The big drums thundered and the trumpets bray'd;
The dance enlivened the convivial hall,
The courtly minuet and the common brawl;
While day by day the sports afresh begin,
And day by day new Guests come trooping in.

To name them all would too much time engross;
There came the erudite Rhinoceros:
Thick-skinned himself, he flayed the thin skinned tribe,
A savage Critic, though himself a Scribe;
In all the gossip versed of former times,
He fashioned hist'ry into nurs'ry rhymes;
Or, told in prose, made it seem all a sham,
By cooking up his facts *à l' épigramme*.

Next the Hyæna, the good Bishop, came,
His restless zeal forever in a flame,
With his devices the whole kingdom rang,
So mixed they were of piety and slang:
No Blood-hound e'er so quick a scent as he
To track the tainted sons of Heresy;
Not Gaul by Roman, nor by Spartan, Helot,

Were used as they were by the reverend Prelate:
Them with his pen he mangled sore; and would
Have had them burnt by inches, if he could.
He came; but not in over-cheerful mood,
For at this time his thoughts could nought but brood
On that accursed and deadly schism which taught
That *in*, and not *by*, baptism Grace was caught.

There was Sir Nibble too, the long-haired Rat;
Haggard and grim and sworn Foe to the Cat;
Though he at one time, unless Rumor lied,
Had wished to 'list himself on Tybalt's side:
Hoped all past differences to efface,
And in his favor to obtain a place.

But when he found his fawning flatt'ry spurned,
His sembled friendship into hate was turned;
Where once he slavered, now he spat his spite,
And shewed his rodent teeth and strove to bite;
But Tybalt thought it prudent to determine
To bide his time till he might crush the Vermin.

There too was Jocko seen, the long-armed Ape,
Who was in mind ungainly as in shape;
Malice and fun in him so nicely blent,
When playful most, then most he mischief meant;
He chattered nonsense with look so demure,
Most Folks would think—he must mean something
sure;

His very talents he would twist to ill,
For he could limn and draw with ease and skill;
But, just to prove his power at grimaces,
Caricatured his best Friends to their faces.

To count them all, for ages would endure;
But Reynard was not one of them, be sure.
In watchful idleness he lurk'd at home,
That false pretended Palmer, bound for Rome.
To visit Court he was too circumspect;
He knew what welcome he might there expect.
Safely at home himself he might applaud;
But not so safely could appear abroad.

Meanwhile was held high junketing at Court;

There all was mirth and jollity and sport;
Feasting and gambling were there, night and day;
And those who came to stuff remained to play.
Full was the royal palace as Noah's ark;
Jousts were there held, and tourneys, in the park.
From his high place the King surveyed the whole,
And the vast tumult fill'd his mighty soul.

'T was now the eighth day of the festival;
The King was set at table in his hall,
His Peers around, and by his side his Queen;
When lo! the Rabbit rushed upon the scene!
Bunny the Mild, his face all smear'd with blood;
And thus he spake, as panting there he stood;
"Ah, Sire! ah, hear me! Lords and Gentles all!
Or some such fate may some of you befall;
What murderous wrongs from Reynard I've received;
Too scandalous almost to be believed!
I passed by Malepartus yesterday;
My road in coming hither led that way;
Dressed out in Pilgrim's habits there he sate,
Seemed to be reading Matins at his gate.
I hurried on, in haste to reach this Court,
Deeming Your summons, Sire, a safe escort.
He follow'd me yet still I thought
That he in courtesy but sought,

His friendly court to shew.

But he, without a moment's pause,
Fix'd in my neck his pointed claws,
And bore me to the ground;
Hardly I scaped with life I trow,
For from his fierce and spiteful blow,
I bear this ghastly wound.

And as I strove his grasp to clear,
The villain tore away an ear,

As all may plainly see!

Bethink thee, Sire, that day by day,
Thy bidden guests are made his prey,
And maim'd or slain on the highway,
For wanton cruelty."

He'd ended scarce, when there arose
Merknau the Crow, to state his woes,
Who cried: "Attend, O mighty King,
And list the hideous tale I bring!
For grief and truth, I scarce can speak,
Methinks my faithful heart will break,
Ere I the horrid deed can tell,
Which this unhappy morn befel.—
As I with Scharfenebb, my dame,
Upon the moor at daylight came,
We found Reynard upon the heath,
Stretch'd out, sans motion, life or breath.

A corse long dead he lies!
His tongue hangs from his gaping jaws,
Stiffen'd in death seem limbs and paws,

Inverted are his eyes!
I felt his head and breast, but not
A sign of life was there I wot,—
Grieved for his loss, and with my mate,
Lamented his unhappy fate,

And course so early run.—
My wife meanwhile, draws near his chin,
And listens if perchance within,

Some sign of life remains;
When snap!—her head is off, and he
Bounds from the earth, and makes at me.
I 'scaped, I know not how, into a tree;
Unconscious terror must have winged my flight:
And thence I saw, oh heavens! what a sight!
Sooner, alas! would I have lost my life!
I saw the Murderer mangle my dear Wife;
Her tender flesh I saw his talons tear,
The crushing of her bones too could I hear.
So mad with hunger seemed the Cannibal,
That he devoured flesh, feathers, bones and all!
That hour of anguish ne'er will be forgot!
The Wretch now satiated left the spot;
And I alighted on that cursed ground,
But nothing there save drops of gore I found,

And these few feathers from my poor Wife's wing,
Which here in Court, to prove my case, I bring.

"My tale is ended, Sire! my task is done:
I've humbly laid my griefs before the Throne.
From his misdoings, all the Realm complains
'T is Reynard rules, and not the King that reigns.
For those who have the power such crimes to stem,
And yet repress them not, encourage them.
Forgive me if too bold in what I say;
But grief is voluble and will have way."

Now all the court had heard these tales of woe,
Both from the gentle Rabbit and the Crow.
And much incensed was Noble, King of beasts,
Who liked not this disturbance in his feasts.

Thus then he spake in angry tones though sad;
"Much have I borne with; but this is far too bad!
In vain it seems that my behests are spoken;
My laws are outraged and my peace is broken.
This traitor has deceived me once before;
But never, never shall deceive me more!
Nor my fault is't that such a Criminal
Is still at large; the Queen has done it all.
I shall not be the last, as not the first,
By woman's idle counsels to be curst.
But if this rebel Thief go longer free,
The name of justice will a mock'ry be.
Take council, then, my Lords, and do your best
To rid our kingdom of this common Pest."

Pleased were the Bear and Wolf this speech to hear;
And thought their hour of vengeance now was near;
But prudently were silent, seeing both
The King so much disturbed and deeply wroth.

At length the Queen in gentle accents spake;
"Do not, dear Lord, your plans too rashly make;
Calm dignity will best assert the Right;
Of angry words th' effect is oft but slight.
Men oft blame Others their own guilt to hide;
Justice demands to hear the other side;
Of those who're loudest in his absence, some,

If he were present, would perchance be dumb.
For Reynard; skilful, wise and wary still
I knew him, and suspected nought of ill.
All I advised was with the best intent,
Though the result has prov'd so different.
From all I ever heard or understood,
If bad his deeds, yet his advice was good.
Behooves us to remember in this case
His num'rous Followers and powerful Race.
With over-haste affairs but badly speed;
But what your Royal will shall have decreed,
That shall your faithful Subjects execute;
And thus ripe counsels yield their proper fruit."

Then spake the royal Libbard thus; "My Lord,
Permit me humbly to throw in a word;
I own I think that Reynard should be heard.
With ease You can Your objects carry out.
When he comes hither, as he will, no doubt.
I think this is the general view; I mean,
We all would take the same view as the Queen."

Then Isegrim spake out; "Forgive me, Prince,
Your words, though wise, do not my mind convince.
Put case that Reynard now were present here,
And from this double charge himself could clear;
Yet would I undertake to show good cause
His worthless life lies forfeit to the laws.
But of such matters better silent be
Until we have him safe in custody.
Have you forgot the wondrous tale he told
About King Emm'rick's hidden store of gold?
At Husterlow, near Krekelburn, he swore
It would be found, and fifty falsehoods more.
Both me and Bruin hath he brought to shame;
And life we hold less dear than our good name.
And yet at freedom roams the Rebel still,
And steals and murders whom and what he will.
If to the King and Council this seem fit,
We, howsoever wronged, must needs submit.
Prince Libbard though suggests he may appear

E'en yet at Court; but why is he not here?
The Royal missive bade all Lieges come;
But he, the skulking Thief! remains at home."

Then said the King of Beasts; "Why more delay?
Why for the Traitor's coming longer stay?
My Royal will is, ye all ready be
On the sixth day from this to follow me.
Unless our pow'r shall quite be set at nought,
These ills, my Lords, must to a close be brought.
Prepare yourselves at once for battle's din;
Come, armed with sword and bow and javelin;
Let each right worthily his weapons wield,
So he may merit knighthood on the field.
My Subjects I expect will aid their Liege;
The fortress Malepartus we'll besiege;
And all its myst'ries into daylight bring."

Then cried they all aloud; "Long live the King!"
Thus were the Monarch and the Peers agreed;
And Reynard's certain doom now seemed decreed.
But Greybeard, at the banquet who had been,
In secret left the gay and festive scene.
He hastened off the wary Fox to find,
And let him know what now was in the wind.
And as alone his weary way he sped,
Thus to himself the grieving Badger said;

"Ah! Uncle dear! how I deplore thy case;
Thou prop and ornament of all our Race!
With thee to aid us and to plead our cause
We never feared the rigor of the laws."

Thus he arrived at Malepartus' gate,
Where in the open air Sir Reynard sate.
Two youthful Pigeons he his prey had made,
Who their first flight that morning had essay'd;
But ill-supported by their new-fledged wings,
They fell, and he pounced on the poor weak things.
Soon as he saw the Badger drawing near
He rose and said; "Ah, welcome, Nephew dear!—
For dear you are to me 'fore all my Kin;—
But what a mortal hurry you seem in!

How hot you are! and how you puff and blow!
You bring some cheerful news for me, I know."

"Alas!" said Greybeard, panting, "anything
But cheerful, Uncle, are the news I bring.
For all, excepting honor, now is lost:
Ne'er have I known King Noble seem so crost;
Deep hath he vowed a shameful death shall be
The doom of Reynard and his Family.

He and his Barons bold, a doughty Band,
Armed at all points,—for such is his command,—
With bow and sword and javelin and spear,
On the sixth day from this will all be here.

Bethink you then in time; for what can you,
'Gainst such an army, single-handed do?

Bruin and Isegrim are with the King
Quite reconciled; their will is every thing.
The Wolf of crimes of every sort and kind
Accuses you, and sways the Royal mind.

He has,—as you will but too shortly see,—
Been raised to a Field Marshal's dignity.

The Crow and Rabbit have been both at Court,
And of your doings made a sad report.

Should the King this time get you in his pow'r,
Your life's not worth the purchase of an hour."

"That all? Your story moves me," quoth the Fox,
"As summer breezes do primæval rocks.

As for the King and all his Council too,
I'll warrant me they'll have enough to do;

At least to talk about; because, in fact,
They'll prate and prate for ever, and not act.

About such trifles, Nephew, do not fret;
But just step in and see what we can get.

You see these nice young Pigeons I've just caught;

They are the best of eating, to my thought;

Their bones and flesh like jellied milk and blood:

So light; and I'm compell'd to take light food;

My Wife too is of the same taste as I;

Come in; she'll welcome you right heartily.

She is not well though, so I would not let her

Know why you come; for trifles quite upset her.
We'll start to-morrow; and I'm nought afraid
But you'll afford me kind and kindred aid."

Quoth Greybeard, "I would die for you with pleasure."

Quoth Reynard, "You oblige me past all measure.
And if I live, as well I trust I may,
Be sure that I your kindness will repay."

"Go," said the other, "go before your Peers,
With that brave honest heart, devoid of fears;
At least a hearing you'll obtain from them.
Even Prince Libbard says they can't condemn,
Until they've heard all you may have to say;
And the Queen thinks precisely the same way.
This hint to your advantage you may guide."

"Be sure I will;" the crafty Fox replied;
"Howe'er the King may storm; in his despatch,
I have no doubt to make the matter right;
I know the bait at which he'll surely bite."

So into Reynard's dwelling now they went;
The housewife welcomed them with kind intent;
The hospitable board was quickly spread,
And on the Pigeons daintily they fed;
Duly divided each one had his share;
Much were they relished and was nought to spare.
They could, for it was but a scanty feast,
Have eaten half a dozen more at least.

The meal concluded, they to chat begin;
And the fond Father has the Children in;
And as they climb and cling about his knees,
They waken his parental sympathies:

"Are they not charming little Rogues?" he said,
"So frolic, yet so thoroughly well-bred.
Russell is such a Scamp; and his young Brother,
Greykin, will one day prove just such another.
Never will they their lineage disgrace;
Their principles do honor to their Race.
One a young straggling Bantam up shall pick,
The other pounce upon a Guinea-chick;

Nor do they rest contented on dry ground,
But plunge for Ducklings in the Parson's pond.
To hunt I'd send them oft'ner, if I durst;
But care and prudence they must study first;
Learn never to be taken unawares,
And to avoid all Hunters, Dogs and snares.
And when by habit they expert shall grow,
And courage, tempered with due caution, show,
In search of prey then daily shall they roam,
And never shall we want for food at home
Slow stealthy step, low crouch and steadfast aim,
Sure Spring and firm grip; that is Reynard's game;
Thus have we still upheld the credit of our name."

"Ay, Children are in truth great blessings, Sir;"
Said Greybeard, who was still a Bachelor.

"Pledges of holy and of lawful love,
A constant joy and solace must they prove;
Centered in them the happy Parents see
The pleasures both of Hope and Memory;
And if sometimes they prove a source of trouble,
That makes, no doubt, the latter pleasure double.
Nor are your joys confined to you alone;
I love your Children as they were my own."

"Suffice it for to-day;" then Reynard said;
"We all are sleepy; let us now to bed."

Then on the floor, soft strewn with leaves and hay,
Their weary limbs adown to rest they lay.
But Reynard could not sleep for haunting cares,
So grave appeared the posture of affairs.
He tossed and tumbled all the livelong night,
With aching eyes he met the morning light.
Then to the Partner of his joys and woes
Thus did he speak, as from his couch he rose;

"Be not alarmed; to Court I go again
At Greybeard's wish; at home you'll safe remain.
That no one know where I am gone 'twere best;
Be of good cheer and leave to Heav'n the rest."

"What!" cried Dame Ermelyne, "Again to Court!
Methinks your foes would wish no better sport.

Are you obliged to go? Bethink you well
Of what on your last visit there befell."

"Indeed," quoth Reynard, "it was past a jest,
I ne'er remember to have been so prest.
But nothing certain is beneath the sun;
No matter how a thing may be begun,
None can say how 'twill finish, till 'tis done.
Albeit 'tis needful that to Court I go,—
For I have much that's weighty there to do,—
Be calm, I beg you; there is nought to fear;
A week at furthest I'll again be here.
Adieu then, for a time, dear Love;" he cried;
Then off he starts with Greybeard at his side.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

THE JOURNEY.

TOWARDS King Noble's Court without delay,
Greybeard and Reynard now held on their way.
And the Fox said, "My heart feels quite elate,
This journey will, I know, prove fortunate.
And yet, dear Nephew, since I last confest,
My life has truly not been of the best.
Hear what fresh crimes I now have to deplore;—
Some too which I forgot to tell before.

"A good stout scrip I've had from Bruin's hide:
The Wolf and his good Lady have supplied
My tender feet, each with a pair of shoes;
'Tis thus I've wreaked my vengeance on my Foes.
The King too, I confess, I've badly treated,
And with gross falsehoods scandalously cheated.
Further,—for nought will I conceal from you,—
I killed the Hare, and what's more, ate him too:
His mangled head by Bellyn I sent back,
Trusting the King would stretch him on the rack.
The Rabbit too, I tried to make my prey;
Although—thank Heav'n for that!—he got away.
Th' offence of which the Crow doth now complain
Is not without foundation in the main;
For why should I the simple truth disguise?
I did devour his wife before his eyes.

"These my chief sins are since my last confession;
But I omitted then an old transgression;
A trick, for which I hope forgiv'n to be,
Against the Wolf, my ancient Enemy

"One day we happened to be travelling

The road between Kaktyss and Elverding;
When we a Mare perceived with her young Foal,
The Dam and Daughter each as black as coal;
'Bout four months old the Filly seemed to be;
Said Is'grim, who was nearly starved, to me,
'See, prithee, Nephew, if you can entice
'Yon Mare to sell her Foal at any price.'
Rash was the venture, I was well aware;
But up I trotted, and addressed the Mare,
'Say, dearest Madam, may I make so bold
'To ask if this sweet Creature's to be sold?
'If so, for it belongs to you, I see,
'I trust upon the price we may agree.'
Said she: 'Yes, if I get the sum I want,
'I'll sell her; and 'tis not exorbitant;
'You'll find it written on my near hind hoof.'
I guessed her meaning and kept well aloof.
'Alas!' I cried, as though I nought suspected;
'My education has been sore neglected;
'Reading and writing are beyond my pow'r;
'My parents have a deal to answer for.
'Not for myself the dear Child I desire;
'It was the Wolf who bade me to inquire.'
'He'd better come himself,' replied the Mare;
Quoth I, 'I'll tell him what your wishes are.'
So where he waited I joined Isegrim:
'The Foal is to be had,' said I to him;
'The price is written on the Mare's hind hoof;
'She kindly offered me to see the proof;
'But 'twas no use to me, who cannot read;
'My life, alas! has sadly run to seed.
'But you, dear Uncle, soon will make it out;
'Approach and read, for you can read, no doubt.'
Said Isegrim, 'I rather think I can;
'German, French, Latin and Italian.
'To school I went at Erfurt, then to college,
'Where I picked up a vast amount of knowledge;
'Took duly my degrees and honors too;
'I swear I quite forget how much I knew:

'All one learns there is wondrously abstruse,
 'Though not, perhaps, in practice of much use.
 'I'll go and the inscription read at once,
 'To prove that, though a Scholar, I'm no Dunce.'
 So off he started to the Mare, quite bold,
 Asked for how much the Foal was to be sold;
 She gave the answer she had giv'n before;
 And down he stooped the writing to explore.
 Her hoof she lifted gently from the grass;
 Fresh shod and armed with six new nails it was;
 And fetched him a full plumper on the head,
 That down he tumbled, stunned, and lay for dead.
 Then off she galloped with her frisky Foal,
 And whinnied as she went, for joy of soul.
 For a good hour the Wolf lay on the ground,
 Then 'gan to howl, like any beaten Hound.
 I hastened up to him, and, 'Uncle, say,'
 Quoth I, 'What causes you lament this way?
 'Have you your bargain made with Madam Mare?
 'And eaten up her Foal? that's not quite fair!
 'Sure, for my pains I should have had my share.
 'And, as you are so learned, prithee do
 'Expound to me the writing on the shoe?'
 'Ah me! I am derided!' he made moan;
 'My suff'rings though might melt a heart of stone.
 'Never before did I so badly fare.
 'Oh! may the Devil fetch that long-legged Mare!
 'Six bleeding wounds I have in my poor head.
 'The only wonder is I am not dead.'

"Thus I've confessed, as far as I am able
 And made my conscience clean and comfortable.
 Now that is done, I trust to hear from you
 Some ghostly counsel what is next to do."

Him Greybeard answers thus; "'Tis true indeed
 Of ghostly counsel you stand sore in need;
 For from your tone I gather that, as yet,
 Your crimes you rather boast of, than regret.
 'Tis true, regret for past misdeeds is vain;
 It cannot bring the Dead to life again.

Your sins I must in charity forgive,
 Seeing how short a time you have to live;
 For certainly the worst results I dread:
 You never can get over that Hare's head.
 It was in sooth a most audacious thing
 To aggravate the anger of the King!
 More mischief to your cause thereby you've done
 Than in your thoughtlessness you reckon on."

"Nay, not a jot," replied th' undaunted Rogue;
 "Self-interest will always be in vogue,
 Those in the world who live must look to rough it,
 And meet with many a kick and many a buffet,
 He who would best get on must rant and roister,
 Nor think to pass his time as in a cloister.
 As for the Hare, I own he tempted me;
 He skipped and sprang about so saucily,
 And looked so plump, that howsoe'er I strove,
 My appetite proved stronger than my love.
 For the Ram's fate I do not care a pin;
 His was the suff'ring; mine may be the sin.
 'Tis not my worst misdeed by many a one;
 My penance otherwise were quickly done.
 To love our Neighbors we are told, 'tis true;
 But Most do just what they ought not to do.
 What's done though can't be helped; and, as you said,
 'Tis worse than useless to regret the Dead.
 Useless indeed, I think, is all regret;
 Save some advantage from it one can get.

"Enough of this! we live in awful times!
 No Rank or Station seems exempt from crimes!
 Corruption from the Rich spreads to the Poor;
 Good men the gen'ral Ill can but deplore;
 And though we dare not speak, we think the more
 "The King himself will plunder, that we know,
 As much as any of his Subjects do;
 And, what he does not take himself, devolves,
 As lawful prey, upon the Bears and Wolves.
 To speak the truth dares not a single Soul,
 The mischief may be ne'er so great or foul.

The Clergy keep quite silent; and no wonder;
They have a decent portion of the plunder
If of extortion any one complains,
He only has his trouble for his pains.
If aught that you possess the Great allures,
Then may you safely say it *has been* yours.
But Few to tales of grievance will attend;
And they are sure to weary in the end.
Noble, the Lion, is our Lord and King;
He acts as if he were Lord of every thing;
He calls us oft his Children; and, 'twould seem,
Forsooth, that all we have belongs to him.
For let me speak my mind; our gracious King
Loves ever those the most, who most can bring;
And who will dance as he may choose to sing.
The Many suffer, though but Few complain;
The Bear and Wolf are now in pow'r again;
They steal and rob and pillage, left and right;
And yet find favor in the Royal sight.
While each who might have influence is dumb,
Living in hopes that his own time may come.
Let a poor Devil, like myself, but take
A paltry chicken, what a howl they make!
They're all upon his back without remorse,
And he's condemned to suffer, as of course.
For those who crimes commit of deeper dye,
No mercy show to petty larceny.

"Such thoughts, I own, have often crossed my mind
When to repentance I have felt inclin'd;
And to myself I've said, in Reason's spite,
That what so many do must sure be right.
Conscience indeed within me sometimes stirs,
And says, with that peculiar voice of hers:
'Reynard, why seek thus to deceive thyself?
'No good came ever of unrighteous pelf.'
Then deep remorse I've felt for doing wrong;
Deep for the moment, but not lasting long.
Because, look round the world which way I would,
I saw the Bad fared better than the Good.

Not, as times go, can every one afford
To cherish Virtue as its own reward.

“The people too, save their nobility,
In all their Betters’ secrets love to pry;
Their faults they will observe and con by rote,
And pick holes e’en in Honor’s petticoat.

“But the worst feature of this pinchbeck age,
Which, if my scorn it mov’d not, would my rage,
Is, that all sorts of public men we see
Merged in the slough of mediocrity.
There will they plunge and wade and flounce and
flounder,

Endeav’ring each to keep the other under;
For if one strive, by merits of his own,
To rise, his Neighbors pelt and pull him down,
As though ’t were quite agreed that little men
From a dead level had the furthest ken;
That by example might the World be schooled
With what a small amount of wisdom it is ruled.

“In private, too, all paltry vices flourish;
Men are morose and selfish, sly and currish:
Backbiting, malice, lying and false-swearing
Have become matters of familiar bearing.
Hypocrites and false Prophets so abound
That Truth, save in a well, can ne’er be found.

“If to remonstrate with them you should try,
Quickly and coolly will they thus reply;

“The sins you mention cannot serious be,
‘Or sure the Clergy from them would be free.’

Thus, following those of a superior station,
The People sin, like Apes, by imitation.
Thinking and acting much as Monkeys do,
They often get the same allowance too.

“Truly the Priesthood better should behave;
With common care, their credit they might save.
But it quite marvelous appears to me
The slight in which they hold the Laity.
Before our very eyes they do not mind
To act in any way they feel inclin’d;

As though we all, like Bats, or Moles, were blind.
And ev'ry one, his eyes who uses, knows
What kind of store they set upon their vows.
Beyond the Alps, 'tis said, that ev'ry Priest
Holds consort with one Mistress at the least;
And what is winked at by the Court of Rome
No wonder should be practiced here at home.
The holy Fathers, if truth may be spoke,
Have children just like any married Folk;
And, with paternal love, take care enough
None of their Offspring shall be badly off;
These, never thinking what was their Mamma,
To lawful Children will not yield the *pas*;
Others they treat with as much slight and scorn,
As they were honestly, nay, nobly born.
Clad in the armor of sheer impudence,
They have of shame or modesty no sense.
Time was, these base-born Sons o' th' Clergy knew
What was their proper place, and kept it too.
But now they go about as brave and bold
As any Lords. Such is the pow'r of gold.

"You see the Priest possessed, go where you will,
Of toll and tribute from each farm and mill;
And thus the World is disciplined to ill.
No marvel the poor People go astray,
When, blind themselves, the Blind lead them the way.

"Where for that pattern Pastor shall we look
Content to feed and not to shear his flock;
Who the pure precepts of the Gospel teaches,
And practices the doctrines that he preaches;
Who, if he suffer Wrong, will pardon it,
And turn his right cheek if his left be smit;
Who upon worldly treasures sets no store,
But sells his all and gives it to the Poor?
Alas! much readier a Priest you'll find
To pride, revenge, and avarice inclin'd.
Such set the Laity a vile example,
And on all precepts of their Master trample.

"As for their Bastards, would they quiet be,

No one on earth would notice them, you see.
'T is but their vanity that we condemn;
For most unjust it were to carp at them.
It is not Race that makes us great or good;
Nor shame nor honor come by birth or blood.
Let Heralds draw what fancied lines they can,
Virtue and Vice alone mark man from man.
The honest Priest will ever honored be;
The bad be shunned, whate'er his pedigree;
How good soe'er the sermons he may preach,
Folks will contrast his actions with his speech.
'What does he for the Church?' they'll argue thus,
'He who is ever preaching up to us—
'Be sure you keep your Church in good repair,
'My Brethren, if of Grace you wish to share;"
'For aught he does himself, while us he fleeces,
'The sacred edifice might fall to pieces.'

"In costly fare and sumptuous array
They squander more than half their wealth away.
Engrossed with worldly thoughts, how can they spare
Their time for acts of piety and pray'r?
While the good Pastor—so at least I've heard—
Devotes his life to th' service of the Lord;
With modest temperance and sober gaiety,
Setting a good example to the Laity.

"Full well too do I know the hooded class;
A dirty, frowsy, hypocritic Race;
A tribe of prowling, prying Creatures, which
Spend their whole time in hunting up the Rich.
Adepts in flattery, they reckon most
How they may use it on a liberal Host.
If one but get a footing, three or four
Are sure to follow, if not many more.
Who in the cloister only longest prates
Is sure to gain promotion o'er his Mates;
Reader he's made, Librarian or Prior,
Or he may even mount to something higher.
Others, as good as he, are thrust aside;
The prizes so unfairly they divide.

Some pass their time in fasting and in pray'r,
While others sleep or sumptuously fare.

"As for your Papal Legates, Prelates, Deans,
Your Abbesses, your Nuns, and your Beguines,
What tales might I tell of them if I would;
Yet little I regret, to say, that's good.
One cry they always have, and one alone;
'T is, 'Give we yours and let me keep my own.'
But few there are, not Ten assuredly,
Who strictly with their Founder's rules comply.
'T is thus the Church acquires a doubtful name,
Is brought to weakness, and sometimes to shame."

"Uncle," the Badger said, "I cannot guess
Why you should other People's sins confess.
If they've done Ill, what Good is that to you?
With your own matters you've enough to do.
Why should you meddle with the Priests and Nuns?
Sure Mother Church can manage her own Sons.
Let each his own peculiar burdens bear;
Let each th' account of his own deeds prepare;
The audit-day will surely come, which none,
Or in, or out a cloister-walls, can shun.

"You talk too much though of all sorts of things;
Scarce can I follow all your wanderings;
I sometimes fear you'll leave me in the lurch;
Pity you did not go into the Church.
Great as your lore, you'd there find scope for it;
I should, with Others, reap the benefit.
The most of us, I own, are Brutes indeed,
And of good doctrine stand in awful need."

Now the Court's precincts they approached at last;
Said Reynard to himself—"The die is cast!"
When on the road Martin the Ape they met,
Who off on a tour to Rome had set;
And both he kindly greeted. "Uncle dear,"
Thus to the fox, "be of good heart and cheer."
Then questions put he to him, not a few,
Although the state of matters well he knew.

"My good luck seems for ever to have fled,"

To Martin then the wily Reynard said;
"Some scurvy Comrades, moved by dirty spleen,
Again, I find, accusing me have been.
The Rabbit and the Crow complain, I hear,
The one has lost a Wife, and one an ear.
But what on earth has that to do with me?
That would I make them pretty quickly see,
If to the King I could but get to speak;
My cause I know is strong, as theirs is weak.
But still I labor 'neath the Papal Ban,
A wretched excommunicated man!
There's not a Soul, except the Prebendary,
Can rescue me from out this sad quandary.
Unhappily, though why I cannot tell,
I don't stand, somehow, with the Clergy well.
This and more evils to a vast amount,
I suffer upon Isegrim's account.

"A Monk he once became; but one fine day
He from the monastery ran away:
The rules he found too rigid, and he sware
He lost his time in fasting and in pray'r.
I helped his flight; a cause of deep regret,
Which I have ever felt and do so yet;
For nought since then he's done but slander me,
And work me ev'ry kind of injury.
What if I made a pilgrimage to Rome;
How would my family get on at home?
Isegrim then would cause them endless Ill;
He'd have the pow'r, as he now has the will.
And many Others are there who design
All sorts of mischief both to me and mine.
If from this awful Ban I were but freed,
My cause at Court were certain to succeed."

Said Martin, "I am glad 'tis in my pow'r
To do you service in this trying hour.
I am just starting on a tour to Rome;
And may do much t' ameliorate your doom.
You are my Kinsman; set your mind at rest;
I will not suffer you to be oppress'd.

I've some weight, as the Bishop's Secretary;
I'll make him cite to Rome the Prebendary;
Against him in your cause will I make fight,
And, Uncle, they shall do you ample right.
The doom of Ban, reversed shall shortly be,
Your absolution I'll bring back with me.
Your Foes their long hostility shall rue,
Losing their labor and their money too.
I know how causes may at Rome be won,
And what is best to do, what leave undone.
My Cousin, Simon, has great influence;
For our name's sake he'll favor your defence:
There's Gripeall too, Greedy and Eitherside,
And Turncoat, and I know not who beside.
For I have at the College many a Friend,
Who to our cause their able aid will lend;
Or, rather let me say, their aid will sell;
For only those they help who fee them well.
I've sent my money first, for that alone
Will there ensure that justice shall be done.
Loudly they talk of justice, and such cant,
But 't is your money that they really want.
How crooked be a cause, or intricate,
The touch of gold will make it plain and straight.
With that to find a welcome you are sure
Without it, closed against you ev'ry door.

"Do you then, Uncle, stay at home; while I
Your knotty cause will manage to untie.
To Court 't were best you should at once repair;
Seek out my Wife, Dame Ruckenaw, when there;
She 's a shrewd Soul, and with the King and Queen
A special Favorite has ever been.
Take her advice, whate'er she recommend;
There 's nothing but sh'll do t' oblige a Friend.
On many a staunch Ally you there will light;
Such often help one more than being right.
Her Sisters two are sure with her to be,
And my three Children, for I have but three;
And many others of our common Kin,

Who 'll stoutly stick by you, through thick and thin.
Should justice be denied you, send to me,
And what my pow'r is you shall quickly see:
An awful Evil on this land shall fall,
On King, Men, Women, Children, one and all;
An Interdict shall on the realm be laid;
No service shall be sung, no mass be said;
No Christian grave receive th' unhouseled Dead.
The land a heathen desert will I make;
Be of good cheer then, Coz, and comfort take.

"The Pope is old, nor sound in mind or limb;
But Few he cares for, and None care for him.
'T is Cardinal Wiseacre rules the Church,
And crows, as roosted on the highest perch;
To which no doubt one day he may aspire,
For he is full of craft and full of fire.
He is anamoured of a certain Dame,
Whom well I know, and, if I would, could name.
Her wishes she has only to make known;
And what she wishes, is as good as done.

"But many tricks and frauds are played at Rome,
Which to the Pope's ears never chance to come.
But no one can get on without some aid;
Friends must one make, or buy them ready-made.
Rely on me, dear Coz; the King well knows,
I will not see you fall before your Foes;
'T were just as well, he should remember too
How Many kindred claim, with me and you:
For sober counsel, not a Family
At Court can with the Apes and Foxes vie.
This cannot fail your dangers to allay,
Let matters even take what turn they may."

Reynard replies, "There's nothing, dearest Coz,
Gives me such comfort as your friendship does:
I shall remember it, an I get free."
Then each the other greeted courteously;
And tow'rds the Court, to face his angry Foes,
Reynard, with no escort but Greybeard goes.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

THE ADVOCACY.

REYNARD had now reached Court, and still had hope
With his accusers he might safely cope;
Yet when his numerous foes he saw arrayed,
All eager for revenge, he felt dismayed;
But though his heart might tremble, with firm stride
He passed the Barons, Greybeard by his side.

Unto the Monarch's throne they both drew near,
When Greybeard whispered thus in Reynard's ear;
"Take courage, Uncle, for the King is gracious;
And, we know, fortune favors the Audacious:
The brave love danger on its own account,
And are more pleased the greater its amount."

And Reynard answered, "What you say is true;
Sage your advice and comfortable too;
Were you in my place I'd so counsel you."

With searching eye he glanced th' assembly round,
Where many Kinsmen, but few Friends, he found;
For at his hands the most but ill had fared;
The Otter nor the Beaver had he spared;
None but he'd played some pranks on, great or small;
Yet with assurance now he greets them all.
And down before the throne he lowly knelt,
And boldly spake, how'er he may have felt;

"May Heav'n above, from whom no thought or thing
Is hidden, long preserve my Lord the King;
And my good Lady too and gracious Queen,
Whose humblest Vassal I am proud t' have been;
And grant you both sound judgment, clear and strong,
The diff'rence to discern 'tween Right and Wrong.

For falsehood now is rife in ev'ry spot;
Almost all men appear what they are not.
Would each man's thoughts were writ upon his brow,
So that his secret soul the King might know;
Then would it plainly to the world appear
How true and loyal is the heart I bear.
I know the Wicked rage together still,
And howl against me, as they always will.
In ev'ry way to injure me they strive,
And of Your countenance would quite deprive;
As though I were the veriest Wretch alive.
But love of Justice is a mighty thing;
None own its pow'r more than my Lord and King.
Let men seek to mislead him as they may,
From the straight path of Right he ne'er will stray."

While thus he spake the Courtiers round him throng,
All wond'ring at the boldness of his tongue.
His crimes so flagrant and notorious were,
That each was anxious his defence to hear.

"Thou Rascal Reynard!" thus the Monarch said,
"Thy glozing speech thy cause can little aid;
On thy persuasive arts no more depend,
Thy shameless course at length hath reach'd its end.
Thy truth and loyalty we all well know,
As witness here the Rabbit and the Crow.
Full is the measure of thy wickedness,
And craft can nought avail thee, boldness less."

Reynard, uneasy at this Royal speech,
Feared now the King he might not over-reach.
For he had spoke in terms precise and plain;
Ah! how he wished he were safe home again!
But wishing now could do him little good;
He must get through it the best way he could.

"Noblest and mightiest of Kings;" he said,
"Though you decree my life is forfeited,
I fain may hope that You will hear me first;
You've heard but one side, and that side the worst.
When clouds and tempests o'er the State were hovering,
Firm have I stood and faithful to my Sovereign,

When some, that I could name, have fled their post,
Some who are now esteemed and favored most,
Who bravely take each opportunity,
When I am absent, most to slander me.
Hear only my defence and then decide;
My doom, whate'er it be, I must abide.

“Forgotten is my service to the State?
How I have early watched and labored late?
If of all crimes not quite exempt I were,
Of my free will should I now venture here?
I should have shunned Your presence conscience-scared,
Nor my Accusers thus to meet have dared.
Nay, the world's treasures, heaped up seven-fold,
Should not have drawn me forth from my strong-hold.
Upon my native heather I was free,
And none might touch me with impunity;
But my good Greybeard with the message came
That I was wanted here, and here I am!
I had been counsel holding with the Ape,
How from the Papal Ban I might escape;
And he had promised to remove the whole
Of that oppressive burden from my soul.
'I will myself,' said he, 'to Rome resort;
'Do you, without delay, repair to Court;
'I'll undertake your character I'll clear.'
Such his advice; he'd own it were he here.
Our Bishop knows the truth of much I state;
Five years has Martin been his Surrogate.

“And here I find complaint upon complaint,
Enough to wear the patience of a Saint.
The ogling Rabbit has, I hear, a case;
Let him stand forth and meet me, face to face!
'T is a light task the Absent to accuse;
But none to hear my answer can refuse.
Scurvy Companions, are they, by my troth!
My Guests they've been, the Crow and the Rabbit, both.
“'T was but the morning before yesterday,
The latter tow'rd's my dwelling came his way;
He greeted me in passing, soft and fair;

I'd just begun the form of Morning Pray'r.
He let me know that he for Court was bound;
I said, 'Heav'n grant you get there safe and sound.'
He spoke of empty stomach, weary feet;
I asked, 'Will you take anything to eat?'
'I fear I might intrude;' was his reply.
'Oh! not the slightest in the world,' said I.
I fetched some wheaten bread and cherries fresh;
(On Wedn'sdays 't is my rule to eat no flesh;)
And Master Bunny seemed contented quite,
And ate his bread and fruit with appetite.
My youngest Son, a forward little Chap,
Suddenly jumped into the Rabbit's lap,
To see if he might chance pick up a scrap,
'T was rude, I own, but the Boy meant no ill;
Children you know, Sire, will be Children still.
But, making no allowance for his youth,
The brutal Rabbit struck him in the mouth.
Poor little Russell! 't was too bad indeed;
For the blow made his lips and nostrils bleed.
And then my eldest, Greykin, quick as thought,
Leapt up and seized th' Aggressor by the throat;
His game he played and 'venged his Brother well!
'T is thus exactly how the thing befell.
I ran directly that I heard the noise,
Rescued the Rabbit, and chastised the Boys.
I do not sympathize with him a jot,
For richly 'he deserved whate'er he got.
Had I meant ill, I had not interposed;
The Young Ones his account would soon have closed.
And this is now my thanks! He says, I hear,
'T was I myself that tore his stupid ear.
A blund'ring tale! I think my powers I know
Rather too well to botch a bus'ness so.
"As for the Crow, he came quite out of breath,
And said his Wife had ate herself to death.
Some great Fish she had gorged, gills, bones and all,
Had choked her, as her swallow was but small.
The truth he best knows; but the Slanderer

Now dares assert that I have murdered her;
May-be he did, himself; there's none can tell;
For my own part it were impossible;
These dingy Devils, when they choose to fly,
No spring of mine could reach, however high.

"Those who bring forward charges such as these
Should prove them by trustworthy witnesses.
This ev'ry Freeman may of right demand;
And on my right I boldly take my stand.
Are there no proofs; another course is clear;
Lo! ready to do battle am I here!
Let both the day and place be now assign'd;
And if a worthy Advers'ry I find,
In birth my equal, I'll the combat dare;
And he the honor who then wins may wear.
Such ever was the rule of law of yore;
So be it now, for I desire no more."

All stood and heard and wondered, Beasts and Birds,
At the audacity of Reynard's words.
The Crow and Rabbit both felt dire dismay,
And secretly from Court they stole away;
Nor did they dare another word to say.

"They muttered to each other; "'T were indeed
Unwise against him further to proceed.
Do what we may, no better should we be;
For after all, what witnesses have we?
The truth unto ourselves is only known,
For with the Felon we are each alone.
So in the end the loss on us would fall.
Oh! would the Devil seize him, once for all!
And he proposes battle now! To us!
Truly the thought is too preposterous!
So powerful and cunning as he is;
So full of vigor and of trickeries!
'T would take to face him five as good as we,
And even then he'd beat them easily."

Both Isegrim and Bruin groaned with ire,
When from Court they saw the Twain retire.

"Are any present here," then said the King,

“Who against Reynard have a charge to bring?
If any such there be, let them advance;
For he stands here on his deliverance.
There were enough to threaten yesterday;
And now their time is come; but where are they?”

Said Reynard, “Ah! ’t is ever the old game;
Those who against the Absent most declaim,
Boasting what they could do, would he but come,
When he arrives, stay prudently at home.
These Sland’ers vile, the Rabbit and the Crow,
Fain would have brought poor me to shame and woe.
But I forgive, since they are penitent;
Most thoroughly ashamed away they went.
How dangerous it is, you all have seen,
T’ encourage those who slander absent men.
They scruple not the truth aside to wrest,
And victimise the Wisest and the Best.
To Others only do these words apply,
Of little moment to the State am I.”

“Hear me!” exclaimed the King, “thou Traitor wild!
Say, where is Puss, the Gentle and the Mild?
My brave and trusty Courier was he,
And treacherously slain hath been by thee.
Had I not pardoned thee thy numerous crimes?
Equipped thee forth to visit holy climes,
With scrip and staff and other pilgrim gear,
Believing thy repentance was sincere?
And thy first act was my poor Puss to kill!
Bellyn thou mad’st thy Messenger of ill:
He in thy wallet brought the mangled head;
And here in open Court unblushing said,
He brought despatches which you both had framed,
Though he the larger share of merit claimed:
But in the wallet was the head alone!
Bellyn hath paid the penalty
And the same fate awaits on thee.
One though hath suffered for the base design;
Bellyn hath lost his life; look thou to thine!”

“Great Heav’ns! What do I hear?” sly Reynard said,

“Puss murdered! Gracious Pow’rs! and Bellyn dead!
Oh, fatal hour! oh, cursed love of pelf!
Alas! alas! that I were dead myself!
With them the choicest treasures have I lost!
Jewels, such as the wide world cannot boast!
The rarest things by them I sent for You;
For I believed them loyal both, and true.
Of Bellyn who would credit such a thing,
His Friend to murder and to rob his King?
Who on this earth could e’er expect to find
Such craft with such simplicity combin’d?”

To hear him out the Monarch would not stay,
He rose and tow’rds his palace took his way;
Nor caught distinctly all that Reynard spake:
Determined was he deep revenge to take.
To his own closet did he straight withdraw,
And found the Queen there with Dame Ruckenaw;
A special Fav’rite had she ever been,
The sly She-ape, both with the King and Queen;
She haply now might do the Fox some good;
For she was wise and wary, sage and shrewd.
Full soon the shrew Dame Ruckenaw
Observed the cloud on Noble’s brow,
And sought to lull the storm to rest,
Which raged within the Monarch’s breast,
“Dread Sire!” quoth she, “if in thy rage
Thine humblest servant dare to wage
A word, impute it to the zeal
I ever for thine honor feel;
Sir Reynard whatsoe’er he be,
Is of my blood and family,
And as at Court he has appeared,
’T is fit that his defence be heard.
Had not his Father, whose fame still endures,
And who was graced and countenanced by Yours,
With evil tongues for ever to contend,
And from false charges his good name defend?
But still his Foes he baffled in the end.
When thoroughly was sifted the affair,

'T was found what close inspection it would bear.
 Although his Sland'ers charged him many a time
 With incapacity, as well as crime;
 Yet he retained his station to the last,
 And, as the Bear and Wolf are now, was grac'd.
 'T would be as well if they themselves could clear
 From all that 'gainst their characters we hear.
 But of the rules of Right they nothing know;
 Both what they say proves this, as what they do."

Then the King answered; "Can you wonder, Dame,
 That Reynard's conduct should my wrath inflame?
 My trusty Hare did he not basely slay?
 And lead that Simpleton, the Ram, astray?
 And now presumes in open Court, forsooth,
 To boast about his loyalty and truth;
 When by the gen'ral voice accused he stands,
 Of crimes unnumbered as the ocean sands!
 'T is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt,
 He breaks My peace and sets My laws at nought.
 With robberies and murders, day and night,
 My land and Lieges doth he vex and fright!
 I'll bear no more!" Then answered the She-ape;
 "Not ev'ry one his course can wisely shape.
 'T is hard to please all men, and giv'n to few
 Both to deserve success and get it too:
 And he who prospers, in his path shall find
 Honor before, Envy and Hate behind;
 His Foes in secret will his ruin scheme,
 When open fight too dangerous they deem.

"And many a time has this to Reynard happed.
 It cannot have Your memory escaped,
 How often to your rescue he hath come,
 With counsel sage, when all the rest were dumb.
 What fine discernment through his judgment ran
 In that late leading case of '*Snake and Man*.'
 None could decide the issue that was raised,
 But he alone; how was his wisdom praised?"

Noble the King reflected a brief space,
 Then answered; "Yes, I recollect the case;

But all the details I have quite forgot.
'T was most confused and tangled; was it not?
I pray you, if you can, the facts relate."

"Briefly," said she, "the whole affair I'll state.

"Two years ago, a Snake of Dragon race
Loudly accused a Peasant to Your Grace.
The Man refused her justice, she complained,
Though twice against him she had judgment gained.
The Man appearing to defend the wrong,
She entered on her case with eager tongue.

"Through a small op'ning in a hedge one day
The Snake, it seem'd, had tried to force her way;
A spring there was before the op'ning plac'd,
Which, as she entered, caught and held her fast.
She must perforce have perished where she lay,
But that a Trav'ler chanced to pass that way;
To whom she loudly cried; 'Oh! pity me!
'Let me implore thee, Sir! and set me free!
And the Man said; 'Well, I will let thee loose;
'T is hard to see thee strangling in that noose.
'Yet ere I do it, thou must frankly swear
'From ev'ry mischief tow'rds me to forbear.'
A solemn oath the anxious Dragon vowed,
Ne'er to harm him to whom her life she owed.
Then from the snare the Man the Snake released;
All gratitude she was, or seemed at least.

"They travelled on together, but ere long
The Dragon felt the pains of hunger strong,
And in a moment on the Man she flew,
Thinking to strangle and devour him too.
With fearful energy he sprang aside,
And 'Oh! is this your gratitude?' he cried,
'Is this the way you keep that awful oath?'
Said she, 'To break it I am truly loath,
'But I am positively faint with hunger;
'I feel a gnawing I can bear no longer.
'I know how shocking is ingratitude;
'But cannot perish here for want of food.'
'Spare me a little yet;' the Man replied;

‘Some People we may meet who shall decide,
‘Impartial Judges betwixt thee and me.’
‘Well!’ tartly said the Snake; ‘so let it be!’

“They journey’d on, till, coming to a pond,
Strongnib, the Raven, with his Son they found;
His name was Little Beaky. These the Snake
Begged the arbitrament to undertake.

The Raven heard the case with thoughtful care,
And, hoping to himself might fall a share,
Straight gave his judgment that the Man be eaten.

‘Now,’ cried the Snake triumphant, ‘I have beaten;
‘My honest purpose shall no more be crost.’

‘Nay,’ said the Man, ‘I have not fairly lost.

‘How shall a Thief on life and death decide?

‘Or such a case by one sole Judge be tried?

‘I stand upon my Right and shall appeal;

‘A Court of four or ten I safe might feel.’

‘Come on then,’ said the Snake; and off they set;
Ere long with both the Wolf and Bear they met.

The poor Man now was seized with mortal terror;
Sure five such Judges never sat in error;

A Bear, a Wolf, two Ravens, and a Snake;

Well might th’ Appellant for his safety quake.

The hungry Court were soon unanimous;

And the grim Wolf delivered judgment thus;—

‘The Snake beyond all doubt the Man might kill,

‘Yet keep her conscience quite unburdened still;

‘’T was plain no law necessity could know,

‘And hunger would release from any vow.’

“Anxious enough the Man was, for the five
Had plain made up their minds he should not live.

Then darting forth her forked and pois’nous tongue
Again the Snake upon the Trav’ller sprung.

He leap’d aside with prompt dexterity,

Crying, ‘Who gave thee power over me?’

‘Twice thou thyself hast heard it,’ she replied;

‘Twice has the judgment been upon my side.’

Then said the Man, ‘Judges yourselves ye call!

Robbers and Murd’rers are ye, one and all!’

‘You and your judgment I repudiate;
‘King Noble only shall decide my fate;
‘To him do I appeal; to his decree
‘Will I submit, though adverse it should be.’

“Then said the Wolf and Bear with jeering grin,
‘You’d better try; the Snake is sure to win.’
They thought no doubt that the assembled Peers
Would counsel You, Sire, just like Wolves and Bears.
Five pressed against poor One, his life to take;
The Wolf, the Bear, the Ravens, and the Snake.
The Wolf indeed put in a triple claim;
His Sons, Thinpaunch and Greedyguts by name,
Each hoped to have a share of the poor Man;
A terrible disturbance these began;
Howling and clamoring in such a sort,
That both were promptly ordered out of Court.

“Humbly imploring justice of your Grace,
Then did the Man begin to state his case;—
The Snake now wish’d to kill him, heedless both
Of all his kindness, and her solemn oath.
The facts the Snake knew could not be denied, hence
She pleaded, in confession and avoidance,
Th’ almighty power of hunger was the cause,
Which owns no master, and obeys no laws.

“Sore puzzled were You, Sire, how to decide;
Solution it appeared the case defied;
Hard to condemn the honest Man it seemed;
And hard to bear sharp hunger’s tooth, You deemed.
Your Council then You summoned to Your aid,
Who only more involved the question made;
Most part gave judgment that the man should die,
But gave their reasons too, unluckily;
And these so bad and inconsistent were,
The more they gave the more they ’broiled th’ affair.
For Reynard, as a last resource, You sent;
He came and heard afresh the argument;
You the decision left to him alone,
And said as he adjudged, it should be done.

“Then Reynard said, ‘Ere I decide the case,

‘’T is needful I should go and view the place;
‘And see the very way the Snake was bound,
‘When by the Traveller she first was found.’
So to the spot they sallied, and when there,
The Snake again was fastened in the snare;
Thus matters stood exactly as they were.

“Then Reynard gave his judgment: ‘Things are now
‘Just as before the cause arose below;
‘And neither party can of triumph boast,
‘For neither now has won, and neither lost;
‘And as the circumstances now appear,
‘The justice of the case to me seems clear:
‘If the Man please to do so, from the noose
‘The Snake, upon her oath, he may let loose;
‘If not, then he can let her hang there still,
‘And go about his bus’ness if he will.
‘Such are my views: if better here there be,
‘Impart them; or, if not, use these with me.’

“Reynard’s decision of this weighty cause
Met at that time with general applause.
From you, my Liege, and all who knew the laws.
The Man vowed better it could not have been;
It even gained th’ approval of the Queen.

“’T was on all hands agreed that fitter far
Bruin and Is’grim were to serve in war;
For they were known and feared in ev’ry spot,
And gladly went where plunder might be got.
Strong are they, big and bold; that none denies,
Yet are their words more bold and big than wise;
And too much of their strength alone they brag,
While in the field behind they often lag.
At home the Bravest of the Brave are they;
At home too always they prefer to stay:
In sooth the Bears and Wolves eat up the land;
’Gainst their united force there ’s nought can stand.
What matters it to them whose house may burn?
To warm them by the flames will serve their turn.
What matters it to them who pine or starve?
While their own meals they take good care to carve.

They gulp the yolk, and leave the shell, and swear
That the partition is most just and fair.

Reynard the Fox though, on the other hand,
The rules of justice well doth understand;
And if some evil he perchance have done,
Remember, Sire, he is not made of stone.

A wiser Counsellor You ne'er shall meet;
Hence am I bold his pardon to entreat."

And the King said; "I must awhile reflect.
The judgment I distinctly recollect;
Justice was done unto the Snake, 't is plain;
Yet still a Rogue is Reynard in the main.

Who trusts him is deceived beyond all doubt;
No bonds so tight but he will wriggle out.
The Wolf, the Bear, the Cat before; and now
Hath he assailed the Rabbit and the Crow;
One of an eye, another of an ear,
A third of life itself he spoils, you hear;
And yet, though why I cannot comprehend,
You seek the odious monster to defend."

"Ah! Sire, I cannot from myself conceal
The service he hath done the Commonweal;"
Thus the Ape answered; "nor will you deny
How num'rous are his Friends and Family."

Then rose the King of Beasts and issued straight
To where th' assembled Court his coming wait.
Round that vast circle as he cast his eyes,
A host of Reynard's Relatives he spies;
To vindicate their Kinsman's cause they came,
And in such numbers they were hard to name;
They ranged together close: on th' other side
The num'rous Foes of Reynard he descried;
The Court they seemed between them to divide.

And thus began the Monarch; "Reynard, hear;
Thyself from this one crime how canst thou clear?
By thee, with Bellyn's help, the Hare is dead;
And as a despatch thou send'st Me back his head.
'T was done to mock My pow'r, that well I know;
But Bellyn has atoned, and so must thou."

“Woe’s me! would I were dead!” the Fox replied;
“But as You find the truth, Sire, so decide.
If I am guilty, let me die, and shame
Fall as a heritage upon my name.
Bellyn, the Traitor vile, hath filch’d from me
The rarest Treasure eye did ever see.
To him and Puss ’t was giv’n; and sure I am,
That Puss was robbed and murdered by the Ram.
Oh! could it be but found; though much I fear
It never more to daylight will appear.”

“Nay,” said the sly She-ape, “why thus despond?
If ’t is on earth it surely may be found.
Early and late we’ll seek and never tire;
Of Priests, as well as Laymen, we’ll inquire.
But, that our labor may not be in vain,
What were the Jewels like ’t were best explain.”

“Ah, well-a-day!” said Reynard; “but they were
Such wondrous costly things, so rich and rare!
To get them back I have but little hope;
None but an Idiot e’er would give them up.
How will it vex poor Ermelyne, my wife;
I fear she’ll not forgive me all her life.
For, doubting Bellyn, if not Pussy too,
She begged me not to let the Treasures go.

“I would commence the search this very day;
But these false charges force me here to stay;
I’m bound in honor to defend my Right,
By the bold ordeal of judicial fight.
If I succeed,—as sure succeed I must,
Since I am innocent and Heav’n is just,—
Unsought I will not leave one spot of ground,
But these lost Jewels shall again be found.”

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

THE SECOND PARDON.

"MY Liege!" thus ran the Fox's crafty speech;
"Before my Friends a hearing I beseech;
What Treasures let them learn for You were sent;
For though 't was foiled, yet good was mine intent;
On me the blame falls not, but on the Thief."

"Say on;" the Monarch answered, "but be brief."

"Honor and Faith, alas! from earth have fled!"
With well-dissembled grief then Reynard said:
"The first of these choice Jewels was a Ring;
Designed a special present for my King.
Of finest, purest gold this Ring was cast;
Yet was the substance by the work surpass'd;
E'en the Crown Jewels 't would not have disgrac'd.
On th' inner side, that next the finger worn,
Engraven letters did the hoop adorn;
Three Hebrew words of meaning strange they were;
Few in this land could read the character.
To Master Abryon of Triers alone,
The meaning of those mystic words was known:
He is a wise and very learned Jew,
Skilled in all tongues'twixt Luen'burg and Peru;
With stones and herbs is he acquainted well;
Knows of what use each one is capable.
He said, when unto him I showed the Ring;
'Concealed here lies full many a curious thing;
'These three engraven names, from Paradise
'Were brought of yore by Seth, the Good and Wise;
'When he, of coming Ills to Man fore-taught,
'In Eden's bow'rs the Oil of Mercy sought.

'Who on his finger wears his Ring shall be
'From ev'ry risk and peril always free;
'Lightning nor thunder-bolt nor magic charm
'Shall potent be to work him woe or harm.'
And furthermore the cunning Master said,
Whose finger bore that Ring, so he had read,
Should never freeze in winter's direst cold,
And calmly live in years and honors old.

"On th' outer side was set a precious Stone,
A brilliant Carbuncle by night that shone,
And, with its clear and phosphorescent ray,
All things discovered, plain as it were day.
Great pow'rs too had this Stone the Sick to heal;
Whoso but touched it free from crime should feel;
Nor grief nor trouble could his mind disturb;
The pow'r of Death alone it could not curb.
And the sage Master unto me made known
The future virtues of this wond'rous Stone;
As thus; the proud Possessor of the Gem
Both fire and water may alike contemn;
Safe from the power of each Enemy,
Betrayed or captured can he never be.
If fasting, on the Stone he gaze, fourscore
Of Foes shall he o'ercome in fight, and more.
The virtues of that Jewel can reduce
The strength of poison and each deadly juice.
Hate it at once will quell; nay, e'en will often
The hearts of those you have befriended soften.

"But who could count this Jewel's virtues o'er?
I found it haply 'mong my Father's store;
And kept it ever sacred for my King:
Myself I knew unworthy such a Ring.
Of right it appertained to him alone,
Whose virtues shed a lustre on his Throne;
On whom depend our hopes and welfare still,
Whose life I've ever guarded, ever will.

"I trusted also, luckless that I am!
A Comb and Mirror to that treach'rous Ram.
I hoped that they accepted might have been,

As a memorial, by my gracious Queen.
They were, in sooth, most precious works of art,
And form'd too of my Father's hoard a part.
Coveted were they greatly by my Wife,
And caused, alas! between us, frequent strife;
She fairly longed for them, she used to say;
But yet I ne'er a single inch gave way.

"Both Comb and Mirror I, with best intent,
Unto my gracious Lady freely sent.
A benefactress kind in Her I see;
From Evil hath she ever shielded me;
When sland'rous charges 'gainst me were preferr'd,
She oft hath interposed a friendly word.
Royal She is by qualities and birth;
And both by words and works She proves her worth.
None so deserved those Treasures as my Queen;
And yet their beauty hath She never seen;
And—ah! that I should say so—never will!
To find them now, I fear, is past all skill.

"First of the Comb to speak. To fashion that,
The Artist took bones of the Civet-cat;
That wond'rous Beast that lives on flow'rs and spice,
And dwells 'twixt India's shores and Paradise.
Dyed in his skin with tints of various hues;
And sweetest odors round doth he diffuse;
Hence do all other Beasts his footsteps trace,
And follow him about from place to place;
For they all feel and know, his very smell
Is certain to preserve them sound and well.
T' was of such bone this precious Comb was made;
His rarest skill the Artist had displayed;
It equalled polished silver in its brightness,
And e'en surpassed it in its lustrous whiteness;
Its scent excelled cloves, pinks and cinnamon;
For the Beast's odor lives in ev'ry bone;
Corruption may his fleshly frame assail,
But o'er his skeleton can nought prevail;
This never knows decay or gives offence,
But keeps away all plague and pestilence.

“Upon the Comb’s broad back one might behold
A large blue Stone engrained with threads of gold;
Where stood in figures, carved in high relief,
The tale of Paris, the young Trojan Chief;
Who one day, sitting by a river’s strand,
Three Godlike Women saw before him stand;
Juno, Minerva, Venus, were they named;
Each for herself had long an Apple claimed;—
Though once ’t was common to them all indeed;—
To end this strife, at length they thus agreed;
Paris the golden Apple should decree
To her he judged the Fairest of the Three,
And hers alone it evermore should be.
All Three the Youth with curious eye surveyed;
‘Let me be fairest held,’ thus Juno said;
‘Let but the Apple be decreed as mine;
‘And riches infinite henceforth are thine.’
Minerva then; ‘The prize on me bestow,
‘And mighty shalt thou be on earth below;
‘Dreadful thy name alike to Friend and Foe.’
Last, Venus; ‘Why to Wealth or Might aspire?
‘Is not King Priamus of Troy thy Sire?
‘Are not thy Brethren, Hector and the rest,
‘Supreme in wealth and pow’r by All confessed?
‘And while their arms still shelter Troy, your sway
‘Does not this land, and foreign realms obey?
‘If Beauty’s Prize thou unto me award,
‘Thine the best treasure Earth can e’er afford:
‘That treasure is a Woman past compare,
‘As noble and prudent, virtuous and fair:
‘Give me the Apple; Greece’s peerless Queen
‘Thou shalt possess; Helen the famed, I mean.’
To her the Apple then awarded he,
Adjudging her the Fairest of the Three.
He by her friendly aid that Lady gay,
The Spouse of Menelaus, stole away;
And long did her sweet fellowship enjoy,
Secure within the sacred walls of Troy.
“Carved was this story on the middle field;

Round which, with graven words, stood many a shield;
That whoso took the Comb up in his hand,
The fable there might read and understand.

“Next of the Mirror hear. In lieu of glass,
A clear and beauteous Berylstone there was;
All things were shewn therein, though miles away;
And that, by night as plainly as by day.
Whoso upon his face or speck or spot,
Or in his eye perchance a cock had got,
Let him but gaze upon that Mirror clear,
And ev’ry blemish straight should disappear.
Who would not, having such a treasure, boast?
Who would not grieve for such a treasure lost?

“Out of a costly wood was made the frame,
Close-grained and shining; Shittim is its name;
No worm can pierce it; and men justly hold,
’T is more than equal to its weight in gold,
The nearest that comes to it in degree,
For its rare qualities, is Ebony.
’T was of this wood, so shining and close-grained,
In days of yore, when King Crompordes reign’d,
A cunning Artist framed a wond’rous Steed,
Of mighty powers and unrivalled speed;
His Rider in a short hour’s space he bore,
With greatest ease, one hundred miles, or more.
I know not all the facts; but any how
A Steed like that you cannot meet with now.

“The Mirror’s border, for a good foot wide,
With exquisite carved work was beautified;
And ’neath each subject an inscription stood,
In golden letters, which its meaning shew’d.

“Briefly of each of these will I discourse:
First came the story of the envious Horse;
Who, racing for a wager with a Stag,
Was greatly vexed so far behind to lag.
‘Shepherd, on the plain, he thus address’d;
‘I’ll make thee wealthy, but do my behest.
‘A Stag has hid himself in yonder brake;
‘I’ll carry thee; mount boldly on my back;

‘Him shalt thou slay, and flesh and horns and fell
‘In the next market town canst dearly sell.
‘Mount on my back at once; we’ll give him chase;’
‘I’ll venture,’ said the Swain, ‘in any case;
‘No harm can come of the experiment.’
So up he mounted, and away they went.
The Stag they saw a little way ahead;
They followed fast, and fast away he fled,
Till the earth trembled under their thundering tread.
Long the chase lasted, but the nimble Hart
Of his Pursuers had, and kept the start;
Until at length, relaxing in his speed,
Thus spake, panting, the over-wearied Steed;
‘Prithee dismount, for I am quite distrest;
‘Heavy thou art, and I have need of rest.’
‘No, by my soul!’ the Shepherd Man replied;
‘It was thyself invited me to ride;
‘I’ve got thee and I’ll keep thee in my power.’
And Man’s Slave has the Horse been since that hour.
Thus Evils, which for Others had been sped,
Will oft rebound on the Projector’s head.

“Now further hear, while I with truth allege
What next was carved around the Mirror’s edge:
How once upon a time it came to pass,
A rich Man owned a Spaniel and an Ass;
The Dog was never known to bark or bite,
And was deservedly a Favorite;
At table by his Master’s side he sate,
Fish, flesh and fowl together with him ate;
Or rested in his lap, and there was fed
With dainty morsels of best wheaten bread.
The Spaniel then, who was a Hound of grace,
Would wag his tail, and lick his Master’s face.
Now Neddy, when he saw the Dog’s good luck
With envy and astonishment was struck;
‘With my Lord’s tastes,’ said he, ‘how can it suit
‘To be so partial to that lazy Brute?
‘Up in his lap it jumps, and licks his beard,
‘As though by such strange antics ’t were endear’d;

‘While I must toil and travail, in and out,
‘Fetch faggots home, and carry sacks about.
‘I wish my Lord would think the matter o’er,
‘And take a dozen Dogs, or e’en a score;
‘I’d wager, in a year they’d not get through
‘One half the work that in a month I do.
‘While with the best his Dogship fills his maw,
‘Half starved am I, or only stuffed with straw.
‘On this hard earth my couch has ever been:
‘And jeered and mocked am I, wherever seen.
‘I can and will this life no longer bear;
‘In my Lord’s favors I will have my share.’
Just as he spoke, his Master chanced to pass;
His game at once begins that stupid Ass;
Cocks up his bended tail, lays back his ears,
And o’er his frightened Lord curvetting rears;
Brays long and loudly, while his beard he licks,
And strives to imitate the Spaniel’s tricks,
Caressing him with hard and lusty kicks.
His terror-stricken Master sprang aside;
‘Oh! take this horrid Ass away,’ he cried;
‘Kill him at once!’ His servants run in haste;
With showers of blows poor Neddy’s sides they baste;
Then in his stable lock him up again:
And thus the Ass he was he doth remain.

“How many are there of this self-same brood,
Who, envying Others, do themselves no good.
Set these in place or power, and just as soon
Might you feed Porkers with a silver spoon.
Let the Ass still his burdens duly bear:
Of straw and thistles make his bed and fare:
Treat him in any other way you will,
The Brute retains his former habits still;
And, taking human nature for his guide,
Seeks his own ends, and cares for nought beside.

“Further will I this narrative pursue:
If these long tales, Sire, do not weary You.
Around the Mirror’s border next was placed,
Carved in relief, with proper legends graced,

The story how Sir Tybalt, heretofore,
Eternal friendship with my Father swore:
Each vowed to Each to prove a firm Ally,
And common danger jointly to defy.
Trav'ling along one day they chanced to hear
A cry of Hounds and Huntsmen in their rear.
'Hark to those sounds,' cried Tybalt; 'good advice
'Were worth, at such a moment, any price.'
The old one said, 'Your terrors, prithee, lull;
'Of wiles and shifts I have a budget full.
'Let's stick together, nor forget our oath;
'And they shall Neither of us have, or Both.'
(He said this merely Tybalt to console;
He had no shifts or wiles, good simple Soul!)
'Bother the oath!' replied the treach'rous Cat;
'Methinks I know a trick worth two of that.'
Into a tree, as fast as he could tear,
He climbed, and left his Uncle planted there.
The poor Soul stood awhile in anxious doubt;
While near and nearer came that Hunter rout.
Then said the Cat; 'Uncle, as you don't climb,
'You'd better ope your budget; now's the time!'
Just then the Beagles caught my Sire in view;
The Huntsmen shouted, and their horns they blew;
Off ran my father; after him the Hounds;
Amid a perfect Babel of mad sounds;
Barking and bellowing and bugle-blowing,
Enough to set the very Devil going.
My Father swate again for very fright,
His fewmets cast, and made himself more light;
And so at length he 'scaped his Foes by flight.
Thus by his best of Friends was he betray'd,
By him to whom he trusted most for aid.
His life was perilled, for those Dogs were swift;
The hole he fled to was his only shift;
And had he not remembered that in time,
His Foes would soon have made short work of him.
"Would of such scurvy Scum the world were rid,
Who treat their Friends as subtle Tybalt did.

How can I love or honor such a Knave,
 Who's sinned the more, the more I pardoned have?
 All this as figured round the Mirror's frame,
 With legends fit to mark the moral aim.

"Upon the next compartment might be view'd
 A specimen of lupine gratitude.

The Wolf had found a Horse's skeleton,
 For little was there left of it but bone;
 He gnawed voracious, and, by evil luck,
 A pointed fragment in his gullet stuck;
 His sufferings were terrible to see,
 He was as nearly choked as Wolf could be.
 He sent forth Messenger on Messenger
 To call the Doctors in, from far and near;
 But though he promised they should well be paid,
 Not one could render him the slightest aid.

At length appeared the learned Doctor Crane,
 With crimson bonnet and gold-pommel'd cane.

'Oh! help me, Doctor!' cries the Invalid;

'Oh! help me, I beseech you, and with speed;

'But from my throat take out this cursed bone,

'And any fee you name shall be your own.'

The Crane of his professions felt no doubt;

He stuck his long bill down the Wolf's huge throat,

And in a jiffey pulled the sharp bone out.

'Zounds!' howled the Wolf; 'you give me monstrous
 pain!

'Take care you never hurt me so again!

'I pardon you; had it another been,

'I might not have so patient proved, I ween.'

'The bone's extracted;' said the cautious Crane;

'You're cured; so never mind a little pain.

'As other Patients are expecting me,

'I'll go, if you'll oblige me with my fee.'

'Hark to the Simpleton!' the rude Wolf said;

'He's hurt me, and yet wishes to be paid.

'T would seem the stupid Idiot cannot know

'How much to my forbearance he doth owe.

'His bill and head, which both were in my maw,

‘Unharmed have I allowed him to withdraw:
‘Methinks that I should ask for the reward!’
’T is thus the Strong all justice disregard.

“These tales, and others of a kindred taste,
In high relief artistically chas’d,
With legends graved in characters of gold,
Around the Mirror’s frame one might behold.
Too good for me so rare a work had been,
For I am all too humble, all too mean;
Therefore I sent it for my gracious Queen.
To her and You, my Liege, I hoped ’t would prove
A token of my loyalty and love.
Much did my Children, little dears, lament,
When from their home away the Glass was sent.
Before it, they were wont, the livelong day,
To skip about and dance and frisk and play,
And laugh in childish innocence of mind,
To see their long thick brushes train behind.
Ah! little did I then anticipate
The Ram’s foul treason or the Hare’s sad fate!
I thought they both were beasts of honest worth,
And the two dearest Friends I had on earth.
Accursed the Murd’rer’s mem’ry I denounce!
All hope though will I not as yet renounce;
Where’er the Treasures are, I make no doubt
To find them still; like Murder, Theft will out.
Much I suspect that Some there present are,
Who know the truth about the whole affair;
Both what befell the Jewels and the Hare.

“Full well I know, my Liege, what weighty things
Must daily occupy the minds of Kings.
It does not stand with reason to expect,
Each trifling matter You should recollect.
Then let me that most wonderful of cures
Recall, which once my Sire performed for Yours.

“Sick lay the King and dangerously ill;
He must have died, but for my Father’s skill.
Who say then, Sire, that neither he nor I
Have e’er done service to Your Majesty,

Not only speak the thing that is not true,
But utter a gross calumny on You.

“Forgive me, Sire, nor deem my tongue too bold,
With Your good leave that tale I will unfold,
My Sire was known, as far as Fame could reach,
To be a learned and a skillful Leech.
All diagnostics of disease he knew,
Judged by a Patient’s pulse, and water too;
Could heal an injury in any part,
And aided Nature with his wondrous Art.
Emetics of all kinds he understood,
And what was cool and thinning for the blood.
With skill and safety could he breathe a vein,
And draw a tooth without the slightest pain.
You will not, Sire, remember this the least,
For You were then a Suckling at the breast.
’T was when drear Winter’s pall the earth o’erspread,
Sick lay Your Father and confined to bed;
So sadly weak that he could not stir out;
They were obliged to carry him about.
All who could medicine were bade to come,
From ev’ry spot between this Court and Rome.
Not One of them encouraged any hope;
But All, without exception, gave him up.
Then my poor Father they called in at last,
Though not till ev’ry chance of cure seemed past.
He felt the Monarch’s pulse, and shook his head;
‘May the King live for ever!’ then he said;
‘Though much I fear he hath not long to live:
‘To save his life, mine own I’d gladly give.
‘The contents of yon vase let me inspect,
‘To see what mischief I may there detect.’
‘Do as he bids;’ the King said to the Nurse;
‘Do what you will; I’m getting worse and worse.’
“Upon the Mirror’s rim was fair engraved
The mode in which Your Sire by mine was saved.
The contents of the vessel they had brought
My Sire examined, with reflective thought;
Then said; ‘To save Your health is but one way;

‘And that will not admit the least delay:
‘Your life is gone, unless, within the hour,
‘The liver of a Wolf you shall devour;
‘He must too, at the least, be sev’n years old;
‘And you must eat it, Sire, ere it be cold.
‘All scruples on the point must be withstood;
‘The water here is thick and red as blood.’
It chanced the Wolf was standing near the bed,
And with disgust heard all my Father said.
To him with feeble voice the Monarch spake;
‘You hear, Sir Wolf, the physic I must take.
‘Quick, then, about it! to effect my cure,
‘You will not grudge your liver, I am sure.’
‘Of no use mine would be;’ the Wolf replied,
‘I am but five years old next Lammas-tide.’
‘Nonsense!’ my Father cried; ‘we soon shall see;
‘For we must lay you open instantly.’
Off to the kitchen then the Wolf was brought;
And out they cut his liver, quick as thought.
’T was dished up smoking on a silver plate,
And by Your Royal Father eaten straight.
From that same hour he was quite cured and well;
Restored to health as by a miracle.
What gratitude the King, Your Father, shewed;
The style of Doctor He on mine bestowed:
At Court none dared this title to neglect,
Or treat him with the slightest disrespect.
Before th’ assembled Peers he wore a cap
Of crimson velvet, with a golden snap;
His place was ever at the King’s right hand,
And honored was by All throughout the land.
“Of his poor Son how diff’rent is the lot!
The Father’s virtues now are all forgot.
The greediest Rogues are now advanced to pow’r,
Who only seek for what they may devour.
Int’rest and Gain are thought of now alone,
And Right and Justice but by name are known.
Great Lords are those, who Servants were before,
And without mercy grind the suff’ring Poor:

Blindly they strike their former Mates among,
Nor heed the least the ranks from whence they sprung.
Their own advantage their sole end and aim,
They still contrive to win, whate'er the game.
'T is such as these that on the Wealthy fix,
Their flatt'ry choking All on whom it sticks:
No man's petition will they ever heed,
If not by costly gifts accompanied:
By rapine and extortion still they live,
And, like the Horse-leech, ever cry, 'Give! give!'

"Such greedy Wolves as these, the choice tit-bits
Would always keep, as their own perquisites:
When a prompt sacrifice their King might save,
Time for reflection they will ever crave.
You see how, in this case, the Wolf preferr'd
To save his liver, rather than his Lord;
And what a liver too! The selfish Brute;
For I without reserve will speak my thought.
In aught that danger to the King involves,
What signifies the death of twenty Wolves?
Nay, without loss, the whole Tribe might be slain,
So but the King and Queen their lives retain.
None seek pure water from a puddled source,
Or from a Sow's ear make a silken purse.
No doubt, Sire, You the whole affair forget;
For you were much too young to notice it:
I'm sure though of the truth of what I say,
As though it happened only yesterday.

"'Graved on the Mirror all this story stood;
For 't was my Father's special wish it should.
Fair was the work and beauteous to behold,
Adorned with Jewels, and inlaid with gold.
Oh! for the chance to get that Mirror back,
Fortune and life how gladly would I stake!"

"Reynard!" said Noble, "I your speech have heard,
And all your tales and fables, ev'ry word.
Your father may have been both good and great,
And haply did vast service to the state:—
It must have happened a long time ago;

I never heard one word of it till now.
But of your evil deeds I learn each day;
Your sport is death; so all My People say.
If these are but old tales, as you declare,
Strange that no good of you e'er meets mine ear."

"Sire!" said the Fox, "allow me to explain.
What you have said has caused Me deepest pain.
To you no good I e'er have done, You state;—
But not a word will I retaliate:
Forbid it, Heaven! for full well, I know,
To You the service of my life I owe.

"Permit me one adventure to repeat,
Which I am certain You will not forget.
Is'grim and I once chanced a Boar to hunt;
We caught him soon; good Saints! how he did grunt!
You came, and much of hunger You complain'd,
And said Your Spouse was following close behind:—
If we would Each give up a little bit,
We should on both confer a benefit;
A portion of our booty we might spare;
And Is'grim answered, 'Yes;'—with such an air;
While all the while between his teeth he muttered,
So that one could not hear a word he uttered.
Said I, 'Sire! have Your wish! I but deplore
'Instead of one Swine we have not a score.
'Say, Which of us the booty shall divide?'
'The Wolf!' You then with dignity replied.
Well pleased was Is'grim, and with shameless front,
'Gan to divide, according to his wont.
One quarter, Sire, he placed aside for You;
Another, to Your Royal Spouse as due;
The other half he claimed as his own share,
And greedily began the flesh to tear;
My humble part, beside the ears and snout,
Was half the lung, and that was all I got;
And all the rest he kept himself; to us
In sooth he was not over-generous.
Your portion soon was gone; but I perceived
Your appetite was by no means relieved.

Isegrim, though, just like a greedy beast,
Pretended not to see it in the least;
Continuing still to gnaw and champ and chew,
Nor offered, Sire, the smallest bit to You.
But then Your Royal Paws did You uprear,
And smite him heavily behind the ear;
It tore his skin, and swift away he sped,
Howling like mad, with bald and bleeding head.
'Thou blund'ring Glutton!' after him You cried,
'I'll teach thee how thy booty to divide:
'Hence! quick! go fetch us something more to eat!'
Then I said, Sire,—You should not want for meat;
I'd follow quickly upon Is'grim's track,
And I'd be bound, we'd soon bring something back.
And You were pleased to say, You were content;
So after Isegrim with speed I went.
He shewed his wound, and grumbled bitterly;
But I persuaded him to hunt with me.
We fell in with a Calf, which we pursued,
And caught him; 't was, I knew, Your fav'rite food;
We brought and laid it at Your Royal feet;
It was an off'ring for a Monarch meet;
You saw 't was fat, and to reward our toil,
With gracious condescension deigned to smile;
And many a kindly word to me You spoke,
And said my hunting always brought good luck;
Adding, 'Now, Reynard, *you* divide the Calf.'
I answered, 'Sire, to You belongs one half;
'That, with Your leave, I place aside for You;
'The other to Your Royal Spouse is due;
'The entrails, such as liver, heart and lungs,
'All this to your dear Children, Sire, belongs:
'I'll take the feet, for those I love to gnaw;
'And with the head the Wolf may cram his maw.'
Then, did You thus address me; 'Where, I pray,
'Learnt you to carve in such a courtly way?'
'Yonder my Teacher stands, my Liege;' I said;
'The Greedy Wolf, with bald and bleeding head.
'Had I not learnt, it were indeed a shame;

‘For, Swine or Calf, the principle’s the same.’

“Thus pain and sorrow did the Wolf befall;
And sure his greediness deserved it all.
Alas! there are too many of the kind;
To sacrifice all else to Self inclin’d.
Their constant thoughts all bent in one direction,
They grind their Vassals, calling it ‘Protection.’
The Poor perchance are starved, but what care they?
Ah! wretched is the land that owns their sway!
Far otherwise, mine honored Liege, You see,
That You have always been esteemed by me;
All that I ever either reap or glean
I dedicate to You and to my Queen.
Whate’er I chance to gain, or great or small;
You surely have the largest share of all.
Think of this story of the Calf and Swine;
Then judge to whom reward You should assign.
But ah! poor Reynard’s merits have grown dim;
All favors now are heaped on Isegrim!
All must submit perforce to his commands;
All tribute pass through his tenacious hands.
But little for Your int’rest doth he care,
Not e’en content with half for his own share.
You heed alone what he and Bruin say,
While Reynard’s wisest words are thrown away.

“But now I am accused and shall not budge;
I know I stand before an upright Judge.
Let whoso will, bring forth what charge he please,
Let him bring forward too his Witnesses;
And pledge, upon the issue of the strife,
As I will do, his wealth, his ears, his life.
Such were the law and practice heretofore
To these I now appeal, and ask no more.”

“Happen what may,” then said the King, “by me
The path of Justice shall not straitened be.
Though thou art tainted, by Suspicion’s breath,
To have a hand in gentle Puss’s death—
My trusty Messenger! I loved him well;
And mourned his loss, far more than tongue can tell!

How did I grieve when I the Beaver saw
That bleeding head from out thy wallet draw!
His crime the Ram atoned for on the spot;
But thou hast leave to fight the matter out.—

“We pardon Reynard’s treasons ’gainst the Crown,
For many services which he hath done.
If Any aught against him have to say,
Let him stand forth and prove it as he may;
Or by sworn Witnesses, or else by fight;
For here stands Reynard to defend his Right.”

Then thus the Fox replied; “My gracious Lord!
My humblest thanks are all I can afford.
To ev’ry one You freely lend an ear;
And e’en the Meanest meet with Justice here.
Heav’n is my witness, with how sad a heart
I suffered Puss and Bellyn to depart;
Some strange foreboding of their fate had I;
For, oh! I loved them both right tenderly.”

Thus cunningly did Reynard play his game;
Thus artfully his endless fables frame.
Another triumph thus his wit achieved,
For he again by all was quite believed,
He spake with so much earnestness, in sooth,
It was scarce possible to doubt his truth.
Some with him even for his loss condoled;
And thus once more his Sov’reign he cajoled;
The story of the trinkets pleased the King;
He longed to have them, ’specially the Ring;
He said to Reynard, “Go, in peace of mind,
Go, and seek, far and near, the Lost to find.
Do all you can; more will I not require;
My aid you may obtain, when you desire.”

“Thanks, Sire;” said Reynard, “for this act of Grace;
Now, in my heart, Despair to Hope gives place.
To punish Crime, and Falsehood to refute,
This is, my Liege, Your noblest Attribute.
Though Darkness still the whole affair enshrouds,
Ere long shall Light dispel the murky clouds.
The quest forthwith, Sire, will I expedite,

Incessantly will travel, day and night;
And when I find the Treasures which I seek,
If to retake them I should prove too weak,
Then will I venture that kind aid to pray,
Which You have offered graciously this day.
Ah! let me at Your feet but lay them down,
Repaid shall be my toil; my loyal truth made known."

The Monarch seemed well pleased to be deceived,
And all the Court as readily believed;
So cleverly the Fox his falsehoods wove,
That what he only said, he seemed to prove.
And Reynard's mind was wonderfully eased,
For he was free to wander where he pleased.

But Is'grim could his wrath no more restrain;
He gnashed his teeth, and thus began complain;
"My Liege, and can you once more yield belief
To this thrice-damned Perjurer and Thief?
Perceive you not, Sire, that in boasting thus,
He but deludeth You and beardeth us?
Truth doth he from his very soul despise;
And all his wit is spent in feigning lies.
But I'll not let him off so lightly now;
What a false Knave he is I soon shall shew;
Him of three grievous crimes I now indict;
And 'scape he shall not, even should we fight.
He talks of calling Witnesses forsooth;—
As though that were the way to get the Truth!
They might stand here and witness all the day;
He'd manage to explain their words away;
And there might be no Witnesses at times;
Should therefore all unpunished be his crimes?
But who will dare the Culprit to accuse,
When he is sure his time and suit to lose;
And from that time for ever, wrong or right,
Be a marked object for the Ruffian's spite?
E'en You Yourself, Sire, by experience know
As well as we, what mischief he can do.
To-day I have him safe; he cannot flee;
So let him look to 't; he shall answer me!"

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

THE DEFIANCE.

THUS Isegrim, the Wolf, commenced his plaint;
Though words would fail his mighty rage to paint;
“My Liege, this Reynard is a Scoundrel still,
He ever has been one, and ever will.
And there he stands, and dares my wrath defy,
Sland’ring myself and all my Family.
My black Beast has he ever been, through life!
What endless Evils has he wrought my wife!
He once contrived the poor Thing to persuade
Into a mill-pond through a bog to wade.
He promised she should gratify her wish,
And catch that day a multitude of Fish;
She’d but to slip her tail into the pond,
And leave it hanging close upon the ground;
Fast would the Fishes fix; she’d soon take more
Than Three besides herself could well devour.
Partly she waded on, and partly swam,
Till to the sluice she got beneath the dam;
There, where the waters stood most still and deep,
Should she her tail drop down, and quiet keep.
Tow’rds ev’ning-tide there came a nipping breeze,
And bitterly did it begin to freeze;
She had not borne it long; but, in a trice,
Her tail was fairly frozen in the ice.
She thought ’t was owing to the Fishes’ weight
She could not move it, and that all was right.
Reynard perceived her case,—the Reprobate!—
And then—but what he did I dare not state—
He shall not now escape me, by mine oath!

That outrage costs the life of One or Both!
Prate as he will, he'll not impose on me;
Nor shall his lying tongue now set him free!
I caught him in the very act, I say—
It was the merest chance I passed that way—
I heard her cry, the poor deluded One!
Fast was she fixed there, and defence had none.
I came, and with my own eyes saw a sight—
Oh Heav'ns! why did my heart not break outright?
'Reynard! what art thou doing there?' I cried;
He heard me, and away the Coward hied.
I hastened to the spot in grief and wrath,
Slipping and slith'ring on the glassy path.
Ne'er had I greater trouble in my life,
Than then, to break the ice and free my Wife.
But my best efforts did not quite avail;
She was obliged, poor Soul! to tug and hale;
And left behind a fourth part of her tail.
Loudly she howled, and long; some Peasants near
Her cries of bitter anguish chanced to hear.
They hurried thither and soon spied us out,
And to each other 'gan to bawl and shout;
Across the narrow dam in haste they swarmed,
With spades and mattocks, pikes and axes armed;
The Womankind with spindles; how they screamed and
stormed!
'Catch them and kill them! curse them!' One and All
Thus to each other did they loudly call.
Such deep alarm I never felt before,
Nor my poor Gieremund, till that sad hour.
We saved our lives, though with the greatest pain,
And had to run till our hides smoked again.
There was one Fellow,—curses on his Soul!
Armed with a long and iron-headed pole,
Who, light of foot, kept foll'wing in our track,
For ever poking at my sides and back.
Had not the night approached with friendly gloom,
We from the spot alive had never come.
And what a hubbub did the Women keep!

Swearing, the Hags! we had devoured their Sheep.
As they were armed with neither pikes nor prongs,
They tried to wound us with their spiteful tongues.
We tow'rs the water took our course again,
And crept among the sedges in the fen.
The Hinds dared not in this pursuit embark,
For luckily it now had grown pitch-dark;
So they returned, sore disappointed, home:
And thus we just escaped our threatened doom.

"You see, my Liege, how grave was this offence;
A mesh of treachery and violence.
Such crimes Your love of justice must condemn;
For None are safe unless You punish them."

The King heard this complaint with patient ear;
Then said, "Be sure you shall have justice here;
Her rights are ever sacred, come what may:
But we will hear what Reynard has to say."

The Fox replied: "If true this tale were found,
Much to my credit would it not redound;
The charge is grave; but gracious Heav'n forbid,
I e'er should act as Is'grim says I did.
All I have done was at his Wife's own wish:
I don't deny I taught her to take Fish;
I told her where they would abound, and shew'd
How she might get there by the nearest road.
But soon as ever of the Fish I spoke,
With greedy haste away from me she broke;
Without reflection hurried to the spot,
And all my rules and cautions quite forgot.
Then if she happened to get frozen in,
From sitting there so long it must have been;
Had she but pulled her tail more quickly out,
She'd have got Fish enough, I make no doubt.
But Gluttony, a vice to be abhorr'd,
Like Virtue, often brings its own reward.
The heart that never will be satisfied
Must needs oft prove a dread and aching void.
Whoso the Spirit hath of Greediness
Will lead a life of trouble and distress;

Him nothing satisfies: this, Gieremund,
When frozen in, by sad experience found.

“And thus it is my trouble is repaid!
Thus am I thanked for all my honest aid!
I shoved and strove my best to set her free;
But much too heavy for my strength was she.
While in this charitable act engaged,
Came Isegrim, and furiously he raged;
He had, it seems, been prowling round the shore;
And there he stood, and fiercely cursed and swore;
I never heard such rude and savage tones;
They made my flesh quite creep upon my bones;
Once, twice, and thrice at my poor head he hurl’d
The wildest execrations in the world.
Thinks I then to myself, ‘It seems to me
‘My safest course at once to fly will be;
‘For it were better sure to run away
‘Than to this jealous Madman fall a prey.’
And well it was I fled, or, by my faith!
Beyond a doubt I had been torn to death.
When two Dogs fight together o’er a bone,
The victory can but remain to one.
I thought it therefore far the safer course
To flee his anger and his brutal force.
For that he is a Brute he can’t deny;
Ask his own Wife: she knows as well as I;
Ask her, and she no doubt will answer true.
With him, the Liar! what have I to do?

“When he perceived his Wife in such a plight,
No doubt he went to help her; well he might,
If by the peasant Rabble they were press’d,
I guess it happened really for the best;
It cannot but have done the She-Wolf good,
Have stirred her sinews, and have thawed her blood.
’T is truly infamous, upon my life,
To hear him now so scandalize his Wife.
But ask herself; think ye, if truth he spoke,
She would not vengeance on my head invoke?

“Meanwhile a week’s imparlance will I crave,

Means to consult my Friends that I may have;
And see what answer it were best to frame,
To meet the Wolf's absurd and groundless claim."

"Nothing but Rogu'ry," answered Gieremund,
"In all you say and do is ever found;
Tricks, treason, treach'ry, stratagems, and lies,—
Falsehoods, in short, in ev'ry shape and guise.
Who trusts your glozing and deceitful tongue,
For his credulity will suffer long.
This no one better than myself can tell;
Witness what happened lately at the well.

"Two buckets there were hanging; you in one—
Wherefore I knew not—had yourself let down;
And nohow able to get up again,
Of your position loudly did complain.
At morning to the spot I chanced repair,
And asked you what you could be doing there;
You answered, 'Cousin dear, come down here too;
'There 's no good luck I would not share with you.
'Get in the bucket and descend with speed;
'Of Fish I promise you a glorious feed.'

"It was some Demon led me, sure, that way,
And made me credit what you pleased to say;
I to your oaths should ne'er have trusted more;
Well do I recollect what oaths you swore:
Not only that of Fish you'd had your fill,
But you had even ate till you were ill.
My sympathy my judgment over-ruled;—
Ass that I was to let myself be fooled!

"Into the bucket did I thoughtless get;
And down it went; the other mounting straight;
And we about midway together met.
Astonished and alarmed, I called to you;
'In Heaven's name, where am I going to?'
'Here we go up and down!' you answered thus;
'So goes it in the world, and so with us.
'Nor let it be a subject of surprise;
'By our own merits we must fall or rise.'
Safe mounted, on the edge you lightly stepp'd

Out of your bucket, and away you leapt;
While at the bottom of the well I lay,
In sad distress of mind, the livelong day,
And suffered endless blows before I got away.

“Some Boors came to the well at eventide,
Nor was it long before poor Me they spied;
Piteous indeed was my unhappy state,
As, cold and wet and hungry, there I sate.
Then to each other said the Boors; ‘Hallo!
‘See! in yon bucket sits our ancient Foe!
‘The Thief from whom we nothing safe can keep;
‘Who eats our Kidlings and devours our Sheep!’
‘Just pull him up!’ said One; ‘I’ll wait for him;
‘And he shall catch it, when he reach the brim.’
‘He for our Sheep shall pay!’ another said:—
I think the debts of all my Tribe I paid.
Blows upon blows fell on me, thick and fast;
A sadder hour than that I never past;
I deemed each moment must have been my last.”

Then Reynard answered; “If you but reflect,
Those blows, you’ll own, had all a good effect.
For mine own part, I honestly admit
They’d not have suited with my taste a bit;
And as the matter stood, you see quite well,
For both to ’scape had not been possible.
To censure me is anything but just:
In such a case you’ll ne’er Another trust
A lesson for the future let it be;—
The world you know is full of roguery.”

“Now,” said the Wolf, “what need of further proof?
From this vile Traitor have I borne enough.
Of yet another outrage I complain;
The marks whereof I even still retain.
Through him I got into the worst of scrapes,
In Saxony among a brood of Apes.
Induced by him I went into the lair;
He knew what mischief I should meet with there.
Had I not fled with timely haste away,
Both eyes and ears I should have lost that day.

But with his lying tongue he told me first—
Ah! be that lying tongue for ever curst!—
That I should find his Lady Aunt within;
Dame Ruckenaw I fancied he must mean.
Of me he wished, I doubt not, to be rid,
And grieved I got away, e'en as I did.
He sent me down, the sly and juggling Elf!
Into that horrid nest;—I thought 'twas Hell itself."

Reynard replied before th' assembled Lords,
Malicious meaning lurking in his words;
"To pity Isegrim I'm half inclin'd;
I doubt if he is in his perfect mind.
If this adventure he desire to tell,
To state it truly would be just as well.

"About three years ago, to Saxony,
With a vast store of booty travelled he;
I followed; so far truth I recognize
In what he states; the rest 's a pack of lies.
And those whose cruelty he now bemoans,
They were not Apes at all, but just Baboons.
With them no kinship have I ever claimed;
Of such alliance I should feel ashamed.
Martin the Ape, and Ruckenaw his Spouse,
They are my Kin, as Ev'rybody knows;
I honor him as Uncle, her as Aunt;
Of their affinity I well may vaunt:
He is a Notary, well versed in law,
Can sign his name, and protests deftly draw.
In what of those vile Creatures Is'grim spoke,
Your scorn at my expense he would provoke.
Relationship with them I quite repel;
For they are like the very Fiends of Hell.
If I then called the old Hag 'Aunt,' 't was done
For prudent reasons to myself best known:
I nothing lost thereby, I fairly own.
Her honored Guest, I sumptuously fared;
Or else she might have choked, for aught I cared,
"You see, my Lords, Sir Isegrim and I
Left the high-road and passed a mountain by.

A cavern in the rear we chanced to mark,
Deep it appeared, and long, and wondrous dark.
My Friend complained, as usual, of a sinking;—
He's got a Wolf inside him, to my thinking;
For let him eat as much as e'er he will,
Who ever heard him own he'd had his fill?—
I said to him; 'The Inmates of this cave
'Will certainly good store of victuals have;
'I make no doubt they'll let us have a share;
'Most seasonable is our coming here.'
But Isegrim replied, 'Go in and see;
'I'll wait for you meanwhile beneath this tree.
'Your social talents no one can deny;
'You make Acquaintance easier far than I.
'Go in, good Coz; I'm sure you'll be so good
'To call me, if you meet with any food.'
He wanted me to face the danger first;
It being more, the Dastard! than he durst.

"I entered; nor without a shudd'ring dread
Did I the long and sinuous passage thread;
And what I saw—oh! not for worlds of gold,
Would I again that awful sight behold!—
A nest of ugly Monsters, great and small,
And their Dam with them, ugliest of them all.
With long black teeth bristled her frightful jaws,
Her hands and feet with long and crooked claws,
A long and hairy tail behind she bore:
Such a grim wretch I never saw before!
Her swart, gaunt Children had the strangest shapes,
And looked, for all the world, like goblin Apes.
She gazed upon me with an evil eye;
'Would I were safe out of this house!' thought I.
Than Isegrim she was a bigger Beast;
Some of her Young too were as big, at least.
This horrible and hideous Brood I found
Bedded on rotten hay on the dank ground,
With filth all slobbered o'er. There oozed a smell
On ev'ry side them, as from pitch of Hell.
The honest truth to speak, for I'll not lie,

I felt small pleasure in their company;
They were so many, and alone was I.
With mine own bosom then I counsel sought,
How from this cursed place I might get out.
I greeted them with many a friendly word;
Although such a deceit my soul abhorr'd;
But thought it just as prudent to be civil;—
E'en as I would be to the very Devil.
I called the old One, 'Aunt;' the young ones 'Cousins,'
And gave them tender epithets by dozens.
'May gracious Heaven grant you lengthened days!'
Thus I began; 'and prosper all your ways!
'Are these your Children? But I need not ask;
'Their likeness it were difficult to mask.
'I vow my very soul with joy it cheers,
'To see them look so well, the little Dears!
'So fresh and nice do you contrive to make 'em,
'Strangers might for the Royal Children take 'em.
'And grateful am I, as I ought to be,
'That you should thus augment our Family,
'And graft such worthy scions on our tree.
'Who has such Kinsfolk is most blest indeed;
'For they may aid him in the hour of need.'
As thus lip-honor forth to her I dealt,
Far different, in truth, from what I felt,
She, on her side, of me made much ado;
Was very civil; called me 'Nephew,' too;
Although the old Fool knew, as well as I,
She bore no kinship to my Family.
I thought, to call her 'Aunt,' was no great crime;
Albeit with fear I sweated all the time.
With kindest words by her was I address'd;
'Reynard, dear Kinsman! welcome, as my Guest!
'T is very good of you, that I will say,
'To drop in on us in this friendly way.
'From your instructions shall my Children gain
'The skill how they to honor may attain.'
Her Courtesy thus did I cheaply earn;
A trifling sacrifice just served my turn;

Claiming her kin, though she was so uncouth,
And holding back some disagreeable truth.
Most gladly would I then have gone away;
But she entreated me that I would stay;
'So short a visit surely you'll not make;
'At least some slight refreshment you will take.'
And saying thus, she brought me heaps of food,
More than I might describe, all fresh and good;
Fish, ven'son, wild-fowl, and all sorts of game;—
Much did I wonder whence the Deuce it came.
Of all these to my heart's content I ate,
And heartily enjoyed the bounteous treat.
And even when I'd had my utmost fill,
She kept on urging me to take more still:—
For some there are so over-hospitable,
Would force their Guests eat more than they are able.—
A joint of fine buck ven'son then brought she
A present for my Wife and Family.
I thanked her, as behoved me, for her cheer;
She was all gracious; called me 'Cousin dear';
And said, 'I hope to see you often here.'
I promised all she asked; indeed I would
Have promised anything, as matters stood.
"At length I managed to get safely off,
Without an accident, and pleased enough;
For nothing found I there, you may suppose,
Either to gratify the eyes or nose.
Through the dark gall'ries did I swiftly flee,
And hastened to the op'ning by the tree:
There on the greensward Isegrim still lay,
Sighing and groaning in a grievous way.
'How fares it with you, Uncle mine?' I cried;
'Ah! nearly dead with hunger;' he replied.
I pitied him, and just his life to save,
The meat I brought to him I freely gave.
He ate it up with grateful gluttony;
Though now he has forgotten all, you see.
His meal concluded, he desired to know,
Who were the Dwellers in the cave below:

‘What sort of Folk are they down there?’ he said;
‘And was your entertainment good or bad?’
I told him just the pure and naked truth;
The nest was vile, the Inmates most uncouth;
In manners wild, uncourteous, and rough;
To make amends though there was food enough:
And if he wished himself to have a share,
He’d nought to do but enter boldly there;
Only he must be mindful Truth to spare.
‘Though Falsehood is almost the worst of crimes,
‘Truth is not to be spoken at all times.’
This I repeated to him o’er and o’er,
And added sev’ral sage instructions more;
‘He who unwisely swaggering about Truth,
‘Has it forever wobbling in his mouth,
‘Is sure to meet with endless grief and woe,
‘And persecution wheresoe’er he go;
‘Others caressed and prosp’rous shall he find;
‘While he in ev’ry place will lag behind.’
I fully warned him what he might expect,
If he these warnings madly should neglect:
‘He who but speaks what Others like to hear
‘Is sure to be respected far and near.’

“These are the very words, Sire, that I spake,
Both for his guidance, and my conscience’ sake:
But if he chose to act quite contrary
And suffer’d for it, who to blame but he?
His locks with age are grizzled, but ’t is plain
One seeks for judgment under them in vain.
Such stupid Brutes on bluntness lay a stress,
And disregard all prudence and finesse;
And, groping underground with mole-like eyes,
Affect the light of Wisdom to despise.
The sole advice I pressed on him, forsooth,
Was not to be too spendthrift of the Truth:
He rudely answered, ‘I should think I know
‘How to behave, at least as well as you.’
Into the cave then did he boldly trot;
And you shall hear what welcome there he got.

“He finds the frightful Dam within her lair,
Like some old dotard Devil crouching there:
The young ones too! With terror and surprise,
‘Help! help! what hideous Beasts!’ he wildly cries;
‘Are these your Offspring, pray? Faugh! how they
smell!

‘Worse than the slime-engendered Spawn of Hell!
‘Take them and drown them!—that is all they’re
worth;—

‘Lest the unclean Brood overrun the earth!
‘An they were mine, I’d have them throttled straight;
‘To catch young Devils they might serve as bait;
‘One need but take them down to some bog’s edge,
‘And let them hang there, fastened to the sedge.
‘Bog-apes indeed! it is a name that suits
‘Their nature well, the nasty, dirty Brutes!’
The outraged Mother answered with a shriek,
For haste and anger scarce would let her speak;
‘What Devil sent this bouncing Knave to us?
‘In my own house to be insulted thus!
‘The vulgar Ruffian! My poor Children too!
‘Ugly or handsome, what is that to you?
‘Reynard the Fox, with fifty times your sense,
‘A man of knowledge and experience,
‘Has only just now left us; he avow’d
‘My Young were handsome, and their manners good;
‘Nay e’en to call them Cousins he was proud.
‘A short time back, and in this very place,
‘All this he stated frankly to my face.
‘If you they do not please, as they did him,
‘Remember you came here of your own whim;
‘Nobody asked you, Gaffer Isegrim!’
But he demanded food of her, and said;
‘Bring it at once, or I your search may aid;
‘I cannot stand your vanity to please.’—
With that he strove upon her store to seize.
Nor prudent was the thought, or wise the deed;
But little did he all my cautions heed.
Upon him, quick as thought, herself she threw,

And bit and scratched him, that the blood she drew.
Her children too were all as bad as she,
And tore and clawed and mauled him fearfully.
He did not dare return their blows again;
But howled and screamed in agony of pain.
He sought,—the only chance his life to save—
With hasty steps, the op'ning of the cave.

“I saw him come, with mangled cheeks and lips,
His torn hide hanging down in gory strips;
One ear was split and bloody was his nose;
He looked, in short, one wound from head to toes.
I asked, for his condition moved my ruth,
‘You surely have not gone and spoke the Truth?’
But he replied; ‘I said just what I thought.
‘Oh! to what sad disgrace have I been brought!
‘The ugly Witch! Ah, would I had her here!
‘I’d make her pay for my dishonor, dear!
‘What think you, Reynard? Have you ever seen
‘So vile a Brood; so nasty and obscene?
‘I told her so, and surely I did right;
‘But straight I lost all favor in her sight.
‘I came but badly off, upon my soul!
‘Would I had never seen the cursed hole!’

“Then answered I, ‘You must be mad, I swear;
‘How widely different my instructions were;
‘Your Servant, dearest Aunt,” you should have said,—
‘It never injures one to seem well-bred;—
‘The world, I hope, goes ever well with you,
‘And your sweet darling little Children too.
‘The joy I feel is more than I can tell
‘To see you looking all so nice and well.”’—
But Isegrim impatiently broke in;
‘What! call that Bitch my Aunt! those Cubs my Kin!
‘The Devil may make off with all the Fry;
‘He their relationship may claim, not I!
‘Faugh! but they are a foul and filthy race!
‘Ne’er again may I meet them face to face!’

“Such were his actions, such was his reward;
Judge then if I betrayed him, good my Lord.

He can't deny that what I've said is true;
At least 't will not much help him if he do."

Then Isegrim replied with wrathful tongue,
His breast with sense of deep injustice wrung;
"What boots this idle war of angry words?
Can we decide our feud with woman's swords?
Right still is Right, whate'er the Bad pretend!
And he who hath it, keeps it to the end.

Reynard now bears himself as vauntingly
As though the Right were his; but we shall see.

"With me you shall do battle; thus alone
On which side truth is marshalled shall be known.
A pretty tale forsooth is this you tell
Of our adventure at the She-ape's cell;
That I was starving and was fed by you!
But in what manner gladly I would know;
For what you brought me was just nought but bone;
You best yourself know where the flesh was gone.
And there you boldly stand, and flout and jeer—
By Heav'n! but this doth touch mine honor near!
Suspicious vile your false and slanderous tongue
On my good name and loyalty hath flung;
That I, devoid of 'legiance and faith,
Had compassed and imagined my King's death:
While you to Him with idle fables prate
Of stores and treasures, at a shameless rate.
Treasures and stores, forsooth! to my poor mind,
Such wonders will be somewhat hard to find.
But what doth most my vengeful wrath arouse
Is the deep shame you've done my dearest Spouse.

"For all these grievances, both old and new,
I will do battle to the death with you.
Here to your face do I proclaim you are
A Traitor vile, a Thief, a Murderer;
And I will make it good, life against life;
And thus, and not by chiding, end our strife.
What I avouch, I am prepared to prove;
Whereof in token here I fling my glove;
Thus formally the battle do I wage;

Stoop then if you have heart, and lift my gage.
My Sov'reign Liege and all th' assembled Lords
Have heard and know the import of my words;
They will assist this trial of the right,
As Witnesses of our judicial fight.
But you shall not escape me anyhow,
Until our feud is settled; that I vow!"

Then with himself did Reynard counsel take;
'Fortune and life are now indeed at stake:
'For big and strong is he; I, weak and small;
' 'Twere sad if ill mine efforts now befall;
'Vain then were all my cunning and my skill;
'Yet will I hope a good conclusion still.
'Of some advantage I may fairly boast;
'Since his fore-claws he hath but lately lost:-
'And, in the end, unless his passion cool,
'He may perchance be foiled, presumptuous Fool!"

Then to the Wolf he boldly thus spake out:
'I stuff the Traitor's name back down your throat!
Charge upon charge against me you devise,
But I denounce them all as groundless lies;
You offer battle now, and haply think
That from the trial I in fear may shrink;
But long I've wished this means my truth to prove;
The challenge I accept! Lo! here my glove!"

Then Noble, King of Beasts, agreed to hold
The gages proffered by these champions bold;
And said, "Bring forth your Sureties now as bail
That at to-morrow's fight you shall not fail,
Both sides I've heard, but understand no more—
Nay, less I may say—than I did before."

As Is'grim's Sureties stood the Cat and Bear,
Tybalt and Bruin; those for Reynard were
Greybeard and Monkie, Martin's Son and Heir.

To Reynard then thus spake Dame Ruckenaw;
"Coolness and prudence now must be your law.
My Husband, who is on his road to Rome,
Taught me a pray'r last time he was at home;
Good Abbot Gulpali did the same compose,

And gave it, as a favor, to my Spouse.
He said it was a pray'r of wond'rous might,
A saving spell for those about to fight:
He who, the morning, this should fasting hear,
Nor pain nor peril all that day need fear;
Vanquished he could not be by any Foe,
Nor death nor wounds of any nature know.
This pray'r o'er you to-morrow will I say;
Then, Nephew dear, be jocund for to-day."

"Thanks, dearest Aunt," said Reynard, "for your care;

Deeply beholden am I for your pray'r;
But mostly do I trust, and ever will,
The justice of my cause, and mine own skill."

All night his Friends remained with him, and sought
With cheerful chat to scare each gloomy thought.
Dame Ruckenaw, more thoughtful than the rest,
Was ever busied how to serve him best.
From head to tail she had him closely sheared,
And then with fat and oil his body smeared;
He stood all smooth and sleek from top to toe,
That he no grip should offer to his Foe.

Then thus she spake; "We must be circumspect,
And on all chances of the fight reflect.
Hearken to my advice; a Friend in need,
Who gives good counsel, is a Friend indeed.
To-night, whate'er you do, before you sleep,
Of light Liebfrauenmilch drink pottle-deep:
To-morrow, when you enter in the lists—
Attend me well, herein the point consists—
Wet well your brush—I need not tell you how—
Then fly upon your unsuspecting Foe;
Lash at his face, and salve him right i' th' eye;
His smarting sight will darken instantly:
This cannot fail to cause him sore distress,
And in the combat profit you no less.
Next must you take to flight, as though in fear;
He will be sure to follow in your rear;
You will take heed to run against the wind,

While your swift feet kick up the dust behind;
So shall his lids be closed with sand and dirt;
Then on one side spring sudden and alert;
And while he stops his smarting eyes to wipe,
Upon them deal another stinging stripe;
Thus, blinded, at your mercy shall he be,
And yours the undisputed victory.

"Yourself to rest now, dearest Nephew, lay;
We will be sure to wake you when 't is day.
But first, as now the midnight hour is past,
Ere yet you slumber, and while still you fast,
Your heart to strengthen, should it chance be weak,
Those sacred words of power I'll o'er you speak."

Then both her hands she placed upon his head,
And with a solemn voice these words she said:
'Tiw rof tfo sessap hsir'bbig gnidnuos-hgih!'
Now ev'ry adverse charm you may defy."

They laid him then to rest beneath a tree;
And there he slept both long and tranquilly.

Soon as the morning o'er the hill-tops brake,
The Beaver came his Kinsman to awake;
With him the Otter; greeting kind they gave;
Bade him arise, and bear him bold and brave;
And laughing said, he had no need to shave.

The Otter brought with him a nice young duck,
And handing it to Reynard, thus he spoke:
"For this I've toiled, while you were fast asleep;
And it hath cost me many a parlous leap;
I caught it at the mill near Huenerbrod;
Eat it, dear Coz; and may it do you good!"

"Gramercy for the handsel!" Reynard said,
With cheerful heart as out he skipped from bed;
"So choice a present I would never slight;
I pray that Heav'n your kindness may requite."

He ate and drank unto his heart's content;
Then to the lists with all his Friends he went;
Down to a sandy level near a field,
Where the appointed combat should be held.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

THE BATTLE.

WHEN Reynard thus before the throne appeared,
Shorn of his hair, with oil and ointment smeared;
The good King was so tickled with the sight,
He could not choose but fairly laugh outright.

"Why, Fox, who taught thee such a trick?" he cried,

"As shave thy hair away, to save thy hide!
Reynard the Fox well may they christen thee,
For all thy life is full of foxery;
No matter how involved may be the scrape,
Thou 'rt sure to find some loop-hole for escape."

Low to the King, with reverential mien,
Bowed Reynard, and still lower to the Queen;
Then gaily did he leap the lists within,
Where waited Isegrim with all his Kin;
Who prayed the Fox might find a shameful fate,
And showered upon him words of threat'ning hate.

The Lynx and Libbard, Marshals of the list,
Brought forth the holy relics in a chest;
The while, bare-headed stood the Champions both,
The Wolf and Fox, and took the wonted oath.

With many angry words and scowling looks,
First Isegrim the Wolf swore 'gainst the Fox:
He was a Traitor, Murderer and Thief;
Guilty of ev'ry kind of crime, in brief;
False unto him and outraging his Wife;
This he would prove against him, life for life.

Then Reynard swore, upon the other side,
That Isegrim, the Wolf, most foully lied;
A Traitor and a Perjurer was he,

While he himself from ev'ry crime was free.

The doughty Marshals then, ere they withdrew,
Bade both the Champions their devoir to do,
And truly keep the rules of lawful fight;
And Heav'n in justice would defend the Right;
The lists then duly cleared of ev'ry one,
They left the Champions in the midst alone.
To Reynard though Dame Ruckenaw drew near,
And, as she passed, thus whispered in his ear;
"Remember, Nephew, the advice I gave;
My counsel follow, and your credit save."

To her, in cheerful tones, the Fox replies
"My heart your kindly warning fortifies;
My wiles have carried me through many a scrape,
Through risks of ev'ry kind and ev'ry shape;
Nor fear I but they shall assist me now
To baffle yonder fierce and savage Foe.
Shame upon him and his I look to heap,
While all my Friends shall fame and honor reap."

Now stand the Champions in the lists alone,
While husht and still the anxious Crowd look on.

Wildly and savagely, with outstretched claws,
With bristling hair, and wide-distended jaws,
Is'grim, the Wolf, the onset first began,
And, swift as thought, at his Opponent ran.
The wily Fox dared not the charge abide,
But, light of foot, sprang actively aside;
Nor did he now his Aunt's advice forget;
His bushy tail already had he wet;
On ev'ry side this did he whisk and flirt,
And so besmear it well with sand and dirt.
Thought Isegrim, "I surely have him now;"
But Reynard dealt him so severe a blow,
Across his eyes, with his bedraggled tail,
That the Wolf's sight and hearing 'gan to fail.

'T was not the only time this trick he'd played;
Others this stinging ointment had essayed;
Isegrim's Children he half blinded so,
As has been hinted at some time ago;

And now he hoped to blind the Father, too.

Having to Is'grim's eyes this salve applied;
Again the wily Reynard sprang aside;
And taking care to run against the wind,
He stirred a mighty cloud of dust behind.
This filled the Wolf's eyes, that they smarted sore;
The more he rubbed, they smarted all the more;
And worse he fared than he had done before.
Meanwhile the crafty Reynard did not fail
To ply with vigor his assiduous tail;
Lashing his Adversary left and right,
Till wholly he deprived him of his sight.
Faint he became, and dazed, and all confused:
The wary Fox quick his advantage used:
"Aha, Sir Wolf,

How many a Lamb and other harmless Beast
Your maw have furnished with a guilty feast;
While I have borne the scandal and the blame,
And your bad deeds have sullied my good name;
But your iniquities henceforth shall cease;
And the poor Innocents may rest in peace.
A boon as gainful 'tis to you, as them,
Your further guilty progress now to stem;
Your only chance is this your soul to save;
Yet if my pardon you will humbly crave,
And freely own that vanquished now you are,
I will have mercy, and your life will spare."

He said; and gripping hard his Foeman's throat,
Again his bleeding cheeks he fiercely smote.
But Is'grim's strength no longer idle lay;
He gave two vig'rous twists, and tore away.
But Reynard at his face once more lets fly,
And sharply striking him, tears out an eye:
A deep and ghastly wound! the smoking blood
Adown his cheek in crimson current flow'd.
"See!" quoth the taunting Fox; "he hath it now;
Avenged am I, and vanquished is my foe!"
But mad with pain and heedless of his wound,
The savage Wolf, with one tremendous bound,

On Reynard sprang, and bore him to the ground:
He seizing in his fearful jaws,
One of Sir Reynard's foremost paws
Shewed him the fight was not yet done
And taught him that to change his tone,
Good reason might be found.
No other way was there to choose,
Unless indeed his paw to lose

Which still he hoped to save;—
Meanwhile the Wolf in angry voice
And wrathful words this wretched choice
To his opponent gave;

"Thrice perjured Knave, thy hour has come,
Yield thee or death shall be thy doom.
Thine hour is come! it little shall avail
To scratch the dust up, or bewet thy tail;
To save thy hair; to smear thyself with grease;
Woe on thee, Miscreant! thou'st run out thy lease!
'Thou'st wrought me countless ills; told many a lie;
Wounded me sorely, and tore out mine eye;
But now, escape thou shalt not; yield or die!"

Thought Reynard then; "This is an evil hour!
What shall I do on earth t' avoid his pow'r?
Me, if I yield not, will this Savage slay;
If I do yield, disgraced am I for aye.
I've earned his hate, for I've abused him still,
With wrong and insult, to my utmost skill."

Then, with sweet words and accents soft and smooth,
He strove his fierce Opponent's wrath to soothe;
"Hear me, good Uncle! I with joy will be
Your Vassal, I and all my Family;
A pilgrimage with pleasure, for your sake,
Unto the Holy Sepulchre I'll make;
I'll visit ev'ry church upon my track,
And endless absolutions bring you back;
Your soul to benefit these cannot fail;
Your blessed parents too they may avail;
Though they may now be in a better place;
Who is there does not need a saving Grace?

I'll honor you, as though the Pope you were;
The deepest and most solemn oaths will swear,
That I myself and all my Relatives
Shall do you homage for our goods and lives;
And suit and service will we yield to you,
More than to our liege King we even do.

"Take then my offer, Uncle, while you may;
And all the land shall quickly own your sway;
All that I catch myself, to you I'll bring;
Fish, Fowls, Ducks, Geese and Pigeons—everything!
Yourself, your Wife and Children, of all pelf
Shall have first choice, ere I will taste myself.
Your safety will I watch with anxious eye,
That harm or danger ne'er approach you nigh.
They call me cunning, powerful are you;
Together what great things may we not do!
What a confed'racy were this of ours!
Wisdom and Strength! who could withstand such
pow'rs!

To join together thus though, but to fight—
That, dearest Uncle, never can be right!
This combat I had done my best to shun,
If but it might with honor have been done.
But, as the public challenge came from you,
What, in the name of honor, could I do?
My courtesy I've carried such a length,
I've not put forth one quarter of my strength:
For to myself I said, 'Now, have a care;
'It is but right you should your Uncle spare.'
Had I but given way to hate or spleen,
How different the issue might have been!
You have not suffered much; if your poor eye
Have met with an untoward injury,
It happened by the purest accident,
For which, with all my soul, do I lament.
I know a simple and a certain cure,
In which you shall participate, be sure:
Or if the hurt be greater than my skill,
You'll have one comforting advantage still:

If you at any time would fain repose,
Only one window will you have to close;
While we, unless we always keep awake,
A double trouble have to undertake.

"Bethink you then, dear Uncle; all my Kin
Shall kneel before your feet, my grace to win:
Here, in full Court, my Children and my Wife
From you shall pray my pardon and my life.
Here will I even publicly declare,
The crimes, I charged you with, but slanders were,
That I have grossly lied; nay, I will vow,
That nought against your character I know;
That, for all future time, I never will
Or breathe or think against you aught of ill.

"This freely will I do to soothe your ire:
What expiation can you more desire?
Kill me; and where will be the slightest good?
My Friends and Kindred will keep up the feud.
Spare me; and think how in renown you rise;
For all will deem you generous and wise.
Prove thus how truly noble is your mind;
Another chance you may not quickly find.
But do your pleasure; for you will, I see:—
To live or die is all the same to me!"

"False Fox!" replied the savage Wolf; "how fain
Thou from my grapple wouldst be loose again!
But were the world one lump of fire-tried gold,
And offered here, my vengeance to withhold,
I would not, base Dissembler, let thee go:
What value are thine oaths, full well I know.
What for thy Friends or Kindred do I care?
Their enmity methinks I well may bear.
Well might'st thou at my silly weakness scoff,
If protestations now could get thee off.
Of thy forbearance thou didst boasting speak!
How is 't mine eye hangs bleeding on my cheek?
By thine infernal claws is not my hide
In twenty places scored and scarified?
When panting I was worn almost to death,

What leisure didst thou grant to fetch my breath?

Pardon and Mercy! That is not the way

That Injury and Insult I repay!

Me thou hast basely wronged; and my poor Wife—

Ah! thou shalt pay the forfeit with thy life!”

Thus spake the Wolf; the crafty Fox meanwhile,

Who saw that nothing could be gained by guile,

Using the other hand he still had free,

Gripped hold of his Opponent savagely

And in so very sensitive a part,

The startled Wolf howled with the sick'ning smart.

Swift then the Fox withdrew his other paw

From the huge chasm of that portentous jaw;

With both his Foeman hard and fast he clenched,

And lugged and scratched and haled and nipped and
wrenched,

That Isegrim screamed out, till blood he spate,

And brake with pain into a seething sweat.

Glad Reynard deemed his conquest now secure;

Yet, tooth and nail, held firm, to make all sure;

While the Wolf, spent and sprawling undermost,

Stifled and blind, himself gave up for lost

The sanguine stream in copious currents flows,

Adown his beard, from eyes and mouth and nose.

Oh! not for heaps of wealth and boundless gold,

The triumph of that hour had Reynard sold!

The more his Foe grew faint and weak, the more

He griped and pinched and bit and clawed and tore;

I' th' dust the Wolf rolled, with dull, hollow sobs.

Gestures unseemly and convulsive throbs.

With wailings loud his Friends the Monarch prayed

He would command the combat might be stayed;

The King replied; “E'en so then let it be,

If you all wish it; 't is all one to me.”

Then Noble bids the Marshals of the list

To cause the champions from the fight desist.

The Lynx and Libbard quick are at their post,

And Reynard as the Conqueror thus accost;

“Enough! the King doth now his mandate send

The combat shall conclude, the strife shall end.
He wills you spare the life of Isegrim,
And leave the issue of the day to Him.
If either of the Twain should lose his life,
We all had reason to regret the strife.

The vict'ry, Reynard, rests with you; we own
That you right nobly your devoir have done;
And have from all golden opinions won."
Then Reynard said; "To all my thanks I pay;
And gladly will the King's behests obey;
Too proud to do whatever he require:
Victor! what triumph can I more desire?
But that my cause I may not prejudice
I humbly crave to ask my Friends' advice."

Then Reynard's Friends with one accord replied;
"We think it best the King were satisfied."
And round him gathered in tumultuous flocks
The Relatives of the victorious Fox;
The Beaver and the Otter and the Ape,
With Greybeard, wished him joy of his escape.
And many greeted him as Friends, of those
Who heretofore had been his dearest Foes;
The Squirrel and the Weasel and the Stoat,
The Ermine too, and some of lesser note,
Who formerly would scarcely speak his name,
Kindred with him, are now too glad to claim.
In fine, he found no end of Relatives,
Who brought with them their children and their
Wives;

While Great and Little with each other vie,
To lavish compliments and flattery.
In the World's circle fares it ever thus;
Good wishes rain upon the Prosperous;
But the unfortunate or needy man
May e'en get through his troubles as he can.

So fares it now; and all the Courtiers strive
How honor to the Victor they may give.
Some sing; some play the flute; the hautboy, some;
Some blow the trumpet; others beat the drum;

And his now num'rous Friends in chorus cry;
 "Hail! happy day of joy and victory!
 Hail! conqu'ring Hero! unto whom we trace
 The honor and renown of all our Race.
 How did we grieve when wounded there you lay!
 How glad we greet the issue of the fray!"

And Reynard answered; "Thanks, my worthy
 Friends;

For all I've borne your kindness makes amends:"
 Then, while behind in swarming crowds they prest,
 Marched onward with the Marshals of the list.
 And thus with acclamations loud they bring
 The Conqueror in triumph to the King.

So soon as they arrived before the throne,
 The Fox with humble bearing knelt him down;
 But the good Monarch motioned him to rise,
 And then addressed him thus, in gracious wise;

"The day is yours by right of victory;
 And from all forfeit We pronounce you free.
 With all Our Aarons, counsel shall be ta'en,

So soon as Isegrim is whole again;
 Then will We judge the cause as best we may.
 The matter is concluded for to-day."

"Your resolution, Sire;" with bow profound
 Said wily Reynard, "is both wise and sound.
 Thou know'st, when first I did appear,
 I stood accused before thy throne,
 And that, by some now standing here,
 Of crimes, which I had never known;—
 This was to please the Wolf, for he
 Avow'd himself mine enemy.

And sought mine overthrow.
 They saw that he held lofty place,
 And had thy favor and thy grace,
 Therefore, they join'd him to decry
 My fame,—and yell'd out 'Crucify!'

A sorry pack, I trow!
 They're like those hungry dogs of yore,
 That gather'd round a kitchen door;

Hoping the cook their plight might see,
And throw a bone, for charity.
While thus they gazed, another hound,
They saw from out the kitchen bound;
And in his mouth a piece of meat,
Which he had stol'n; but his retreat
The cook had mark'd—hot water thrown,
And scalded him unto the bone,

But still he kept his prize.

'Ah, Ah!' the others cry 'see, see!
Gad' zooks, a lucky dog is he,
And stands in favor with the cook,
Heavens, what a piece!—nay, only look!

But quickly he replies:

'My friends, 'tis not as you suppose—
Small favor have I had, God knows,

And as you all may see!

Seen from the front, no doubt you find
My case is good;—but look behind,

And you will pity me!

They look'd, and saw his scalded tail
And back, on which the hair did fail;
And gazed in horror and dismay,
Hung down their tails, and slunk away,

Leaving him there alone.

"Such is the fate, Sire, of the Covetous;
They prosper and they perish ever thus:
In pow'r they find no lack of eager Friends,
Who fawn upon them for their selfish ends;
With kind indulgence all their foibles treat,
Because their mouths are haply full of meat:
From All they look for and receive respect;
For who will dare the Prosp'rous to neglect?
Allies in Old and Young alike they find,
Until misfortune falls on them behind;
Their enviable lot then alters quick,
Their former Friends to them no longer stick;
But right and left fall off, like scalded hair,
And leave them in their sorrow, lone and bare;

Or as that sycophantic pack of Hounds
Forsook their comrade, when they saw his wounds.

"Ah! Sire; all humble though he be, and weak,
Shall None of Reynard thus have cause to speak.

I set some value on my honest name;

My Friends through me shall never come to shame.

One only mission have I to fulfil;

To learn and execute my Sov'reign's will."

"What need more words?" thus did the King reply;

"We comprehend the matter perfectly.

To you as a free Baron We restore

All privileges you e'er held before.

Henceforth at Court Our favors shall you meet,

And at Our Privy Council take your seat.

To pow'r and honor will we raise you up;

And you shall well deserve it, as we hope.

Whatever faults are charged on you, 't is clear

We never can afford to miss you here.

Of all your Peers none can above you rise,

If only you prove virtuous as wise.

No fresh complaints against you will We hear,

No matter what Complainants may appear.

Nay, to evince Our confidence still more,

We now appoint you Lord High Chancellor."

Then did the Fox before the Monarch kneel,

Saying; "Ah! could I speak the thanks I feel

To You, Sire, and my gracious Lady dear,

And, I may add, to everybody here!

May Heav'n eternal blessings on you shower;

Would to confer them were but in my power.

"And now with grateful, though with humble heart,

I crave Your kind permission to depart;

And to my Wife and Children home return,

Who still with anxious tears my absence mourn."

"Depart in peace!" replied the mighty King;

"And fear not any man or any thing."

So Reynard left with all his Kin; two score

There were who with him journeyed, if not more.

All full of triumph and of joy they are,

And in their Kinsman's glory hope to share.
While he himself his transports noway veils;
But stalks as proud as though he had two tails;
To think he'd won such honor by sheer wit
And how the bravest use to make of it.

"This realm henceforth (thus to himself thought he),
On true Fox principles shall governed be,
By members only of my Family.
A certain truth the world may thus behold,
How much more wisdom is of worth than gold."

Thus he, with all his Friends, as an escort,
Reached Malepartus, his domestic fort.
He thanked them for the sympathy they'd shewn,
When he in peril's harm had stood alone;
And promised all their kindness to repay;
Then they departed and went each his way.

His dwelling then he entered, where he found
His Wife and Children haply safe and sound.
How Ermelyne rejoiced to see her Lord
To her fond arms alive and well restor'd!
And earnestly she prayed him to relate
By what good chance he 'scaped his threatened fate.

Reynard replied; "It was not chance, dear Wife,
But skill and cunning that have saved my life.
Again with Noble reconciled am I;
Ne'er in his favor have I stood so high.
He's called me to his Council, as of yore,
And in full Court has named me Chancellor:
Has given into my keeping the Great Seal;
So henceforth I shall rule the Commonweal.

The Wolf have I in battle overcome;
In future are his lips forever dumb;
Wounded he lies, disabled and disgraced;
My marks of vengeance on him have I placed.
Her streams of sorrow may his Wife unsluice;
Henceforth her Husband is of little use
But nothing shall I grieve on that account;
Vanquished is he, and I, Lord Paramount.
Be of good cheer then, Love; for happy hours

The future has in store for us and ours."

Great was the Vixen's gladness; while her Boys
Their Sire half deadened with their frantic joys
They frisked and sprang about on ev'ry side;
"Oh, happy day! oh, joyful hour!" they cried;
"Who upon earth so fortunate as we?
For honored through our Father shall we be.
Our Enemies we now may set at nought,
And have it our own way, as Foxes ought."

Now Reynard lives in honor and in state;
Then let us all his wisdom imitate;
Eschew the Evil and select the Good:
This moral points our tale, when understood.
The truth with fables hath the Poet mixed,
That Virtue in your hearts may be infixed;
And you who purchase and peruse this poem
May see the ways o' th' world, and learn to know 'em;
As it has been, is now, and aye will be.
Here then ends Reynard's life and history;
And with a bow we here lay down our pen.
The Lord preserve us evermore. Amen!

The scribe who erst this tale did write,
Now wends him to the Wolf's sad plight;
Tells how his friends, the Bear and Cat,
In rueful council o'er him sat;
And bore him from the lists away,
Upon a litter stuffed with hay.
How learned leeches dressed each wound,
How all his hurts were salved and bound,
And twenty-six in number found.
How some rare herb, rubb'd in his ear,
Caused signs of life to re-appear;
And how in piteous case he lay,
Stretch'd on his bed for many a day
His wife attended him with care,
But mourn'd the loss she had to bear,
For faith! unto their mutual pain,
He ne'er was quite himself again.

DATE DUE

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